

Meet the New Hamas, Same as the Old Hamas

by Joseph S. Spoerl (August 2017)



In May 2017, Hamas released a [“Document of General Principles and Policies”](#) in which it attempts to recast its message to the world so as to make it more palatable to Westerners and others. It does this by, among other things, ostensibly eschewing the anti-Semitism that was such a strong feature of the original [1988 Hamas Charter](#) (or Covenant)¹.

In an [interview](#) with the *New York Times*, outgoing Hamas leader Khaled Meshal stated, “We are making it clear that ours is a liberation project—not about

religion or the Jews.”² Indeed, the new “Document of General Principles and Policies” makes the following statement: “ Hamas affirms that its conflict is with the Zionist project not with the Jews because of their religion. Hamas does not wage a struggle against the Jews because they are Jewish but wages a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine.”³

There are at least six reasons for not taking this claim seriously.

First, anti-Semitism is central to Hamas propaganda, as documented copiously in the Appendix to this article, and Hamas has not renounced or ceased producing such propaganda. For example, in April 2017, just as Hamas was about to release its May 2017 Document, Hamas member of the Palestinian legislature Marwan Abu Ras gave a [Friday sermon](#) at a mosque in the Gaza Strip in which he said, “History attests that in every era, the Jews were the most abhorred of people. Throughout history, the most hated race was the Jewish race . . . Why did [Hitler] hate the Jews? Because they are a people of treachery and betrayal . . . Therefore, we can never accept the Jews . . . ”⁴

Bear in mind that the speaker was a Hamas elected official and that Gaza Strip mosques are strictly monitored and controlled by Hamas and staffed by Hamas appointees. And when perusing the Appendix below, bear in mind that most of the items are taken from broadcasts on the official Hamas TV station, Al-Aqsa TV.

Secondly, Hamas has made it clear that it has not revoked its 1988 Charter, which remains its statement of foundational principles.⁵

Thirdly, strictly speaking, the Hamas Charter of 1988 focused its anti-Semitic language (mostly) on Zionists, for example, describing the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as the blueprint for the Zionist project (Article 32) and

accusing the Zionists of aiming to “annihilate Islam” (Article 28). The May 2017 Document continues in this vein, albeit in somewhat less florid language, asserting that “The Zionist project does not target the Palestinian people alone; it is the enemy of the Arabic and Islamic Ummah posing a grave threat to its security and interests. It is also hostile to the Ummah’s aspirations for unity, renaissance, and liberation and has been the major source of its troubles. The Zionist project also poses a danger to international security and peace and to mankind” (#15). In short, Zionism is a global threat against Islam and, indeed, humanity: any Hamas supporter familiar with the 1988 Charter will get the point immediately. As in the 1988 Charter, the 2017 Document merely takes all the classical tropes of anti-Semitism and focuses them on Zionism, noting that “it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity” (#16). In effect, Hamas is saying that it is at war with all Jews except those who are anti-Zionist, thus it is not anti-Semitic. This can hardly be regarded as a serious repudiation of anti-Semitism.

Fourthly, the release of the May 2017 Document coincides with a [tightening of the grip](#) by hardliners on the Hamas Politbureau.⁶ These include former Hamas Interior Minister Fathi Hammad, who [told](#) Al-Jazeera TV on September 16, 2016: “I address the American people: Is it conceivable that a handful of Jews control your policies, your military, your money, and everything . . . ? We have five million of the Zionist enemy here [in Israel], and they control the world. Perhaps there are ten million more of them in America. These ten million control over 280 million Americans.”⁷ Hammad’s use of the term “Zionist” in this statement as a synonym for “Jew” makes his anti-Semitism as clear as can be. And in an [interview](#) on Hamas’ Al-Aqsa TV on December 14, 2010, Hammad made no pretense of focusing on “Zionists,” asserting: “The Jews have become abhorred and loathed outcasts, because they live off of corruption and the plundering of the peoples—not only the Arab and Islamic peoples, but all the peoples of the world.”⁸ The suggestion that leaders such as Fathi Hammad have abandoned anti-Semitism is hardly credible.

Fifthly, Hamas has a well-documented history of dissembling, especially when addressing non-Muslims. In 1993, as revealed by FBI surveillance, Hamas operatives met in Philadelphia to establish a new front in the United States, which they would subsequently call the Council on American-Islamic Relations or CAIR.⁹ The Hamas officials at the 1993 Philadelphia meeting called for outright dishonesty to mask the true agenda of CAIR. “I swear by Allah that war is deception,”¹⁰ said one, quoting the Prophet Muhammad. “Deceive, camouflage, pretend... Deceive your enemy . . . politics is a completion of war.”¹¹ This kind of duplicity is a standard part of the Muslim Brotherhood *modus operandi* in Western countries (and, as its 1988 Charter makes clear, Hamas is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood—something not mentioned but also not denied in the May 2017 Document). In a 2004 [investigative report](#) on the Muslim Brotherhood in the U.S.A., the *Chicago Tribune* noted: “Documents obtained by the *Tribune* and translated from Arabic show that the U.S. Brotherhood has been careful to obscure its beliefs from outsiders.”¹² To better deceive their American audience, the Hamas operatives in Philadelphia in 1993 decided to create a new organization, CAIR, one whose “Islamic hue is not very conspicuous . . . Let’s not hoist a large Islamic flag and let’s not be barbaric-talking,”¹³ as one participant put it. Yet when addressing fellow Muslims, Hamas operatives speak their mind openly, as when Hamas military leader Sheikh Muhammad Siyam [told](#) an audience in Los Angeles in 1994, “I’m going to speak the truth to you. It’s simple. Finish off the Israelis! Kill them all! Exterminate them! No peace ever!”¹⁴ The May 2017 Document gives Hamas rhetorical flexibility: when addressing true believers, they can stress that the Hamas Charter of 1988 remains in full force; and when addressing gullible Westerners, they can invoke the May 2017 Document and insist (insincerely) that their dispute is only with “Zionists” not Jews qua Jews.

Finally, there is the unmistakable fact that the May 2017 “Document of General Principles and Policies” proclaims Hamas’ intention to commit politicide against the world’s only Jewish state. It makes it clear that “Palestine” encompasses the entire former British Mandate, including Israel proper as well as the West Bank and Gaza: “Palestine, which extends from the River Jordan in the east to the Mediterranean in the West . . . is an integral territorial unit” (#2);

"Palestine is an Arab Islamic land" (#3). The goal of Hamas is "to liberate Palestine" so defined (#1); "There shall be no recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist entity" (#19); "Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea," although it considers the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, including a full "right of return" for the Palestinian "refugees," as a "formula for national consensus," whatever that means (#20). Any establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, however, will be a mere step towards the full "liberation" of "Palestine," and such a (partial) Palestinian state will be a staging ground for ceaseless war against Israel, since "Resistance and jihad for the liberation of Palestine will remain a legitimate right, a duty and an honour for all the sons and daughters of our people and our Ummah [i.e. the whole Muslim world]" (#23; cf. #25-7). Hamas also makes clear its ongoing commitment to building up its military capacity and waging terrorism against Israelis: "Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws . . . " (#25) and "Hamas rejects any attempt to undermine the resistance and its arms. It also affirms the right of our people to develop the means and mechanisms of resistance" (#26).

In short, despite its new "Document of General Principles and Policies," Hamas has not changed at all. It remains committed to the destruction of Israel by any means at its disposal, including indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians, and its world-view is still marked by deep Jew-hatred.

Appendix: Documenting Hamas Anti-Semitism

(Sources listed in reverse chronological order)

"Hamas MP Marwan Abu Ras: Hitler Hated the Jews Because They Are a People of Treachery and Betrayal," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 6041, April 21, 2017, <https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-mp-hitler-hated-jews-treachery-betrayal/transcript>.

"Gaza Friday Sermon by Hamas MP Marwan Abu Ras: The Jews Recruit Prostitutes, Girls With Aids, to Lure Arabs into their Traps," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5846, January 5, 2017, <https://www.memri.org/tv/gaza-friday-sermon-hamas-mp-marwan-abu-ras-jews-recruit-prostitutes-girls-aids-lure-arabs-their/transcript>.

"Hamas-Affiliated Scholar Bassam Jarrar: The Jews Played A Role in the Economic Collapses of Germany in the 1920's and America in 2008; Allah Turned Them Into Apes and Pigs," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5853, December 20, 2016, <https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-affiliated-scholar-bassam-jarrar-jews-played-role-economic-collapses-germany-1920s-and/transcript>.

"Hamas Leader Mahmoud Al-Zahar: Trump Possibly a Jew; Money Is the Jewish Religion, Key to U.S. Decision-Making," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5758, November 9, 2016, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/5758.htm>.

"Hamas TV Host Sheikh Wael Al-Zarad: Israel, the Jews Live on Blood and the Sight of Body Parts," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5719, September 15, 2016, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/5719.htm.

"Hamas' Fathi Hammad, Designated Global Terrorist by the U.S. State Department: This Will Lead to Global Instability... Will Affect World Peace," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5682, September 17, 2016, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/5682.htm>.

"Hamas MP Marwan Abu Ras in a Friday Sermon: The Jews are the 'Vilest Nation in History,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5664, August 26, 2016,

http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/5664.htm.

" Hamas Clerics Al-Zarad and Al-Astal: The Jews Are The 'Enemies of Mankind' Who 'Wallow in the Shedding of Blood,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5406, February 25, 2016, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/5406.htm.

"Senior Hamas Official Al-Bardawil: Jews Kill Palestinian Children in Order to Knead Their Blood Into Passover Bread," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5187, November 26, 2015, <http://www.memri.org/clip/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/5187.htm>.

" Hamas Cleric and TV Host Iyad Abu Funun: The Zionists Are More Nazi Than Hitler," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5152, October 29, 2015, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/5152.htm>.

"Former Hamas Interior Minister Fathi Hammad: 'Plunge the Knives in the Chests and Bellies of the Enemies,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5130, October 19, 2015, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/5130.htm>.

"Gaza University Dean of Quranic Studies Approves Killing Jewish Women and Children," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5122, October 16, 2015, <http://www.memri.org/clip/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/5122.htm>.

" Hamas Cleric and TV Host Abu Funun: We Will Not Leave a Single Jew, Dead or Alive, on Our Land," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5115, October 13, 2015, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/5115.htm>.

Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, " Hamas video celebrates Jerusalem bus terror attack, with 'reenactment,'" Palestinian Media Watch, Oct. 15, 2015,

http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=15917.

"Children on Hamas TV: We Want to Wage Jihad and Blow Up the Jews," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 5070, September 4, 2015, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/5070.htm#.

"Hamas MP Marwan Abu Ras: The Jews' Conspiracies and Treachery Led to the Holocaust," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4769, January 23, 2015, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4769.htm>.

"Murder of Jews at prayer enacted by Hamas' student block at Al-Quds University," by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, January 13, 2015, Palestinian Media Watch, http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=13679.

"Palestinian Imam and Hamas TV Host Abu Funun Justifies Hitler: The Jews Spread Corruption Everywhere," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4702, December 28, 2014, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4702.htm>.

"Young Boy Recites Song on Hamas TV: The Jews Are Barbaric Apes, the Most Evil of Creatures," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4675, December 5, 2014, http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/4675.htm#.

"Former Hamas Interior Minister Fathi Hammad: We Will Annihilate the Brothers of Apes and Pigs," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4632, October 31, 2014, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/4632.htm.

"Article on Hamas Website: Our War Against the Occupation is A Religious War

Against the Descendants of Apes and Pigs," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 5885, November 18, 2014, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/8230.htm>.

"Former Jordanian MP Abd Al-Mun'im Abu Zant: Jews Permit Cannibalism, Use Human Blood in Passover Matzos," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4498, September 2, 2014, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4498.htm>.

"Preacher on Hamas TV: The Jews are the Enemies of Mankind," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4477, August 31, 2014, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4477.htm>.

"Hamas Sermon: We Pledged Before The Commanders Of The Jihad To Die For The Sake Of Allah; We Have Gathered The Zionists From All Corners Of The Globe So That It Will Be Easier To Slaughter And Kill Them," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4442, August 22, 2014, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4442.htm>.

Itamar Marcus, "Hamas TV: Every Muslim mother 'must nurse her children on hatred of the sons of Zion,'" Palestinian Media Watch, August 3, 2014, http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=12237.

"Top Hamas Official Osama Hamdan: Jews Use Blood for Passover Matzos," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4384, July 28, 2014, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/4384.htm.

"Hamas Sermon from the Gaza Strip: Our Doctrine Entails Exterminating the Jews," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4376, July 25, 2014, http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/4376.htm.

"Editor of Hamas Paper: Murder of Palestinian Teen in Jerusalem Reminiscent of Jews' Custom of Baking Matzos With Blood," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 5788, July 3, 2014, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/print8061.htm>.

Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, Palestinian Media Watch, "Hamas to kids: Shoot all the Jews," May 5, 2014, http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=11384.

"Columnist on Hamas-Affiliated Website: The Jews Have Conquered the German Spirit With the Lie of the Holocaust," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 5682, March 18, 2014, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/print7888.htm>.

"Hamas MP Al-Astal: We Must Massacre Jews, Impose Jizya Poll Tax on Them," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 4202, March 6, 2014, http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/4202.htm.

"Former Hamas Official: In the Past, the Jews Slaughtered Christian Children on Passover; Today They Torment and Kill Palestinians Instead," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 5295, May 6, 2013, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/print7166.htm>.

"Hamas MP and Cleric Yunis Al-Astal: The Jews Were Brought to Palestine for the 'Great Massacre' through which Allah Will 'Relieve Humanity of Their Evil,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 3840, May 16, 2011, http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/2934.htm.

"Osama Hamdan, Head of the Hamas Foreign Liaisons: Armed Confrontation Will Continue to Be 'the Backbone of the Resistance,' the Israelis Must Return to Their Countries of Origin," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2949, May 4, 2011, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/2949.htm.

Anti-Defamation League, "Hamas in their own Words," May 2, 2011, <http://www.adl.org/anti-semitism/muslim-arab-world/c/hamas-in-their-own-words.html>.

"Former Hamas Minister of Culture 'Atallah Abu Al-Subh: 'The Jews Are the Most Despicable and Contemptible Nation to Crawl upon the Face of the Earth,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2897, April 8, 2011, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/2897.htm.

"Hamas Interior Minister Fathi Hamad: The Americans and the Jews Are Abhorred Worldwide; The Americans Are Led by the Jews, 'Outcasts Who Live Off Corruption and Plundering,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2734, December 14, 2010, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/2734.htm.

"Hamas Leader Mahmoud al-Zahar Justifies Persecution of Jews in History and Promises that Jews 'Are Headed to Annihilation,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 3373, November 12, 2010, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2676.htm>.

"Hamas senior Mahmoud al-Zahar has recently given a vicious anti-Semitic speech to justify the elimination of Israel and the deportation of Jews from the 'entire territory of Palestine'. The speech contains themes reminiscent of those found in Al-Zahar's anti-Semitic book No Future Between Nations, found on board the Mavi Marmara," The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, November 11, 2010, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/pdf/PDF_10_294_2.pdf.

"Deputy Hamas Minister of Religious Endowments Abdallah Jarbu': Only a Madman Would Think Jews Are Human," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2430, March 19, 2010, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/2430.htm.

"Hamas Deputy Minister of Religious Endowments: Jews are Bacteria, Not Human Beings," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2415, February 28, 2010, http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/2415.htm.

"On Hamas TV Friday Sermon: Calls to Annihilate the Jews, Who Are Compared to Dogs," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2080, April 3, 2009, http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/2080.htm.

"Sheikh Yousuf Al-Qaradhwai: Allah Imposed Hitler Upon the Jews to Punish Them – 'Allah Willing, the Next Time Will Be at the Hand of the Believers,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 2005, February 1, 2009, <http://jcpa.org/text/iran2-june08.pdf>.]

"Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhwai On Al-Jazeera Incites Against Jews, Arab Regimes, and the U.S.; Calls on Muslims to Boycott Starbucks and Others; Says 'Oh Allah, Take This Oppressive, Jewish, Zionist Band of People...And Kill Them, Down to the Very Last One,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 2183, January 12, 2009, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/print3006.htm>.

"Hamas Cleric Muhsen Abu 'Ita: The Annihilation of the Jews in Palestine One of the Most Splendid Blessings for Palestine," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 1877, July 13, 2008, http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/1877.htm.

"On Hamas TV: Hamas Culture Minister Presents Excerpts from Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Claims Jews Trying to Control the World," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 1905, July 1, 2008, <https://www.memri.org/reports/hamas-tv-hamas-culture-minister-presents-excerpts-protocols-elders-zion-claims-jews-trying>.

Steven Erlanger, "In Gaza, Hamas' Insults to Jews Complicate Peace," *The New York Times*, April 1, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/01/world/middleeast/01hamas.html?pagewanted=all>.

"Speaker of Palestinian Legislative Council Ahmad Bahr Refers to Jews as 'Brothers of Pigs and Apes,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 1553, August 21, 2007, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/1553.htm>.

"Hamas Al-Aqsa TV: A Mickey Mouse Character Teaches Children About the Islamic Rule of the World And To 'Annihilate the Jews,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch No. 1577, May 9, 2007, <https://www.memri.org/reports/hamas-al-aqsa-tv-mickey-mouse-character-teaches-children-about-islamic-rule-world-and>.

"Acting Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council Sheik Ahmad Bahr from Hamas, Declared during a Friday Sermon at a Sudan Mosque that America and Israel Will Be Annihilated and Called upon Allah to kill the Jews and Americans 'to the Very Last One,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 1426, April 13, 2007, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/1426.htm>

"Sheik Yousef Al-Qaradhwai: The Jews of Today Bear Responsibility for their Forefathers' Crime Against Jesus," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 1249, August 26, 2006, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/1249.htm>.

Meir Litvak, "The Anti-Semitism of Hamas," *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 12:2-3 (2005), <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=345>.

David Firestone, "Mideast Flare-Up: The Money Trail: F.B.I. Traces Hamas's Plan to Finance Attacks to '93," *The New York Times*, Dec. 6, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/06/world/mideast-flare-up-money-trail-fbi-traces-hamas-s-plan-finance-attacks-93.html>.

Esther Webman, *Anti-Semitic Motifs in the Ideology of Hizballah and Hamas* (Tel Aviv: The Project for the Study of Anti-Semitism at Tel Aviv University, 1993).

¹"The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch Series No. 1092, February 14, 2006, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/1609.htm>.

²Declan Walsh, "Hamas Leader Plays Final Hand: Trying To Lift Group's Pariah Status," *The New York Times*, May 2, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2pujYaf>.

³Hamas, "A Document of General Principles and Policies," available on the Hamas website www.hamas.ps, <http://hamas.ps/en/post/678/a-document-of-general-principles-and-policies>, section #16.

⁴"Hamas MP Marwan Abu Ras: Hitler Hated The Jews Because They Are A People of Treachery and Betrayal," Middle East Media Research Institute, Clip No. 6041, April 21, 2017, <https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-mp-hitler-hated-jews-treachery-betrayal>.

⁵*The New York Times* reports that Hamas "has not even formally repudiated the 1988 charter...", Declan Walsh, "Hamas Leader Plays Final Hand: Trying to Lift Group's Pariah Status," *The New York Times*, May 2, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2pujYaf>