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THE MARTYRDOM OF ISMAIL HANIYEH IN IRAN AND ITS IMPACTS ON PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, THE REGION, AND THE WORLD



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Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS)



THE MARTYRDOM OF ISMAIL HANIYEH IN IRAN AND ITS IMPACTS ON PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, THE REGION, AND THE WORLD

Introduction

Although the Palestinian struggle against Zionism dates back to the early decades of the 20th century, it gained a more serious and organized form following the establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in 1987 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. This movement succeeded in training key political and military figures in Palestine and beyond, instilling in them a belief that martyrdom is the ultimate reward for their service, a belief they embraced with pride. Many of these individuals attained this reward while standing on the front lines of the military and political struggle against Israel, often through targeted assassinations carried out by the Zionists. This path was notably marked by the martyrdom of Salah Shehadeh, the true founder of Hamas's military wing, in 2002, the martyrdom of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the movement's founder, and Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, a prominent figure within Hamas, in 2004. Numerous other military and political figures within Hamas have been assassinated by the Zionist regime during this period. Recently, the deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, Saleh al-Arouri, in Beirut, and Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's political bureau in Iran, were assassinated by the Zionist regime.

Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, was born in 1962 in the Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. As a young man, he became involved in the political struggle against Israel and was first arrested by the Zionist regime in 1987, spending 18 days in prison. In 1988, he was imprisoned for six months, and in 1989, he was incarcerated for three years by the Zionist regime. After the Islamic Movement Hamas won the parliamentary elections in 2006, Haniyeh became the Prime Minister of Palestine. However, he later resigned to pave the way for national reconciliation among Palestinian forces. Ultimately, in 2017, he was elected as the head of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas by the Shura Council. On July 31, 2024, Haniyeh was martyred in Tehran by Israel.

This article addresses several key topics, including global reactions and possible scenarios surrounding the resistance, the impact of Ismail Haniyeh's assassination on the resistance fronts in Palestine, an analysis of the political and security situation in the Middle East following Haniyeh's martyrdom, the appointment of Yahya Sinwar as the head of Hamas's political bureau, and the future of Palestine.



GLOBAL REACTIONS AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FACING THE AXIS OF RESISTANCE

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, one of the most prominent figures in Palestinian resistance, took place while he was in Iran to attend the inauguration ceremony of the new Iranian President, Masoud Pezeshkian. Although officials from over 80 other countries attended the ceremony, Haniyeh, along with one of his bodyguards, was assassinated on July 31 of this year in his dormitory in northern Tehran by Israel, in collaboration with the United States, in clear violation of international law. This act has provoked significant national and international reactions. Beyond the condemnation from Palestinian officials and factions, government representatives from China, Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, and dozens of other countries have strongly condemned this attack. In many Islamic and Arab countries, absentia funeral prayers have been held for Haniyeh.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, and President Masoud Pezeshkian have declared the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh on Iranian soil a "red line," stating that avenging his blood is a duty of the Iranian government. Based on this, Iran's reaction to Haniyeh's assassination may unfold within one of the following scenarios:

1. **Security:** Iran may seek to demonstrate its intelligence and security capabilities by either assassinating a key Israeli figure or targeting specific objectives.
2. **Military:** Iran could respond more forcefully than its previous measured retaliations, coordinating with resistance movements in Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq to launch a calculated, organized, intense, and simultaneous attack.
3. **Logistical Support:** Iran might increase its military assistance and cooperation against Israel, which could have severe consequences for Israel.
4. **External Pressure:** Although this scenario is less likely, Iran might succumb to Western pressure, particularly from the United States, and abandon its plans for retaliation in favor of a more conciliatory approach.

THE IMPACT OF ISMAIL HANIYEH'S ASSASSINATION ON THE RESISTANCE FRONTS IN PALESTINE

The martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh brought a wave of sorrow and grief to freedom-loving people around the world and especially to the Axis of Resistance, particularly in the Gaza Strip. The loss of the highest political leader in any movement undoubtedly



carries significant negative effects. However, immediately after the news of Haniyeh's assassination spread, a flood of statements from various political levels and Palestinian factions emerged, describing Haniyeh as a "great national leader in the land of Palestine." Here, we highlight some of these reactions.

Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Secretary-General of the Palestinian National Initiative, stated that "Haniyeh's blood will not be in vain." He described Haniyeh as a model of generosity, resilience, and a sincere advocate for national unity. Barghouti emphasized the need to fulfill Haniyeh's vision of establishing unified national leadership to confront the war against Zionism, adding, "His unjust killing will only strengthen the resolve of the Palestinian people to continue their struggle and resistance for freedom."

Mohammad al-Hindi, Deputy Secretary-General of the Islamic Jihad Movement, noted that Israel is facing such resistance for the first time in its history. He described Ismail Haniyeh as a "martyrdom project" since his youth, and said that the Israeli regime's reactions reflect its confusion and inability to achieve any of its objectives. He further added that this assassination was not only aimed at Palestinian resistance and Hamas but also at Iran, asserting that Haniyeh's martyrdom will strengthen the resistance, and the response to this crime will be on the battlefield.

Maher Taher, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's international relations, stated that with this crime, the enemy "has crossed all red lines and is pushing everything toward an all-out war." He emphasized that the Axis of Resistance is fully prepared, and the confrontation is progressing to its maximum level. He warned that the enemy will regret committing this sin.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine also condemned Haniyeh's assassination, noting that given his significant role in the resistance and unity, his loss is a major blow to the people and the resistance. However, they added that this crime will undoubtedly make the resistance stronger and deepen its resolve and commitment.

Considering these statements regarding Ismail Haniyeh's martyrdom, along with the historical pattern of assassinations of leaders, as mentioned in the introduction, and the immediate appointment of a high-ranking military and political leader within Hamas as Haniyeh's successor by the Hamas leadership council, it appears that Haniyeh's martyrdom will have the following impacts on the resistance fronts in Palestine:



1. First and foremost, it must be noted that the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is not only a jihadist movement but also an intellectual school of thought that has produced dozens of leaders similar to Ismail Haniyeh. Therefore, the assassination of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh will not affect the movement's decisions, plans, strategies, or its relations with other countries or organizations.
2. The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh underscores the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle against the Zionist regime, provoking the anger and fury of the Palestinian people and the resistance fronts. This could lead to intensified attacks against Israel, reinforcing the resilience and determination to continue the struggle.
3. Haniyeh's martyrdom will strengthen nationalist and anti-Israeli sentiments among Palestinians and solidify unity within the Axis of Resistance, potentially leading to unified actions among anti-Israeli movements in Palestine. This might result in a regrouping of forces and coordinated attacks against Israel.

ASSESSING THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST FOLLOWING HANIYEH'S ASSASSINATION

The Middle East holds immense significance for the modern world from various perspectives. Geographically, it lies at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa, making any instability in the region capable of quickly spreading to other parts of the world and causing widespread geopolitical impacts. From a resource standpoint, the Middle East is one of the primary sources of energy, particularly oil and gas, globally, and any fluctuations in this region can have significant effects on global energy markets. Additionally, key trade passages such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal are among the most critical maritime routes for international trade. Any unrest in these areas could disrupt global trade and lead to increased costs. Politically, instability in the Middle East can influence the security and military policies of major powers, potentially escalating international competition and tensions.

In this context, Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau, with the support of the United States, has raised serious political and security concerns, signaling potential instability in the Middle East. Here are some of the key points:



1. **Regional Repercussions:** The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, along with the killing of Fouad Shukri, a prominent Hezbollah leader in Beirut, could provoke severe military and security responses from both Iran and Lebanon against Israel. This could destabilize the Middle East, forcing regional countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, and even Turkey to clarify their positions on the Palestinian issue. Israel's actions have undermined these nations' efforts to broker ceasefires and end the conflict in Palestine.
2. **U.S. Influence and Regional Dynamics:** Israel's actions, supported by the United States, reflect a self-serving U.S. approach to the Middle East, where it seeks to minimize the influence of its regional rivals, especially emerging powers. In this scenario, the Axis of Resistance's stand against the U.S. and Israel in the Middle East presents an opportunity for rivals like China, Russia, and other regional powers with vested interests in the Middle East to support the resistance, either directly or indirectly, to weaken U.S. influence in the region.
3. **Escalating Chaos:** Following Haniyeh's assassination, the Middle East has plunged into chaos. The U.S., the U.K., and France have advised their citizens to leave Lebanon, while Iran has repeatedly emphasized its intention to retaliate against Israel, and Israel has instructed its citizens to prepare for war. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has requested that its territory and airspace not be used for any conflict. These developments indicate a state of political and security turmoil in the Middle East.
4. **Increased Tensions and Human Rights Violations:** The assassination of Haniyeh will undoubtedly escalate tensions between Israel and the Palestinians. We may witness an increase in rocket attacks or retaliatory strikes from the Axis of Resistance and other factions involved in the conflict. This could lead to a rise in human rights violations in the Middle East and provoke international outrage.
5. **Israel's Desperation:** Haniyeh's assassination in Iran by Israel reflects a sign of Israel's failure, as it appears to be attempting to directly involve the region, particularly Iran, in the conflict. It seems that Prime Minister Netanyahu, with little left to lose, may be attempting to take others down with him, potentially leading to widespread destruction.



6. **Potential Alliances and Global Implications:** After Haniyeh's assassination and with the increasing prominence of Yahya Sinwar, the Axis of Resistance may seek to garner support from other countries to counter Israel and the United States. This could lead to the formation of new alliances and anti-American and anti-Israeli stances on an international level, raising the specter of a potential global conflict.

YAHYA SINWAR'S APPOINTMENT AS HANIYEH'S SUCCESSOR AND THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE

Yahya Sinwar, recently chosen as the successor to Ismail Haniyeh as the head of Hamas' political bureau, is one of the most prominent military and political figures within the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), having spent about 22 years in prison. Sinwar founded Hamas' security service, known as Al-Majd, and in 2017, he became Haniyeh's successor as the head of Hamas' political bureau in Gaza. Recently, he has once again taken over this position. Sinwar, often referred to by nicknames like "The Shadow Man," "The Living Dead," and the mastermind behind Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, remains a largely mysterious figure with little known about his characteristics.

It is noteworthy that Yahya Sinwar's appointment as the leader of Hamas' political bureau, following his role as the commander of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, has sparked significant and alarming reactions in Israel. With this decision, Hamas has demonstrated that if the international community remains indifferent to Israel's crimes, the movement is prepared to escalate its stance against Israel in response to these atrocities. The presence of Yahya Sinwar as the highest political authority, combined with his military background, may lead to the following scenarios:

- **Aggressive Policies:** Sinwar's position as the highest political leader, coupled with his extensive military and security experience, might lead Hamas to adopt more aggressive policies towards negotiations with Israel, potentially escalating tensions further.
- **Regional Security Implications:** The elevation of such a powerful military figure to the top political position within Hamas could be perceived as a significant threat to regional security and Israel, compelling the international community to reassess its approach to the Palestinian issue, especially if the United States



becomes directly involved in the conflict. This could lead to greater regional and global threats.

- **Strengthening Regional Resistance:** Sinwar's involvement in politics could serve to unite and strengthen the resistance fronts within Palestine, preparing regional powers for a decisive confrontation with Israel.

Any of these scenarios would reflect Hamas' firm stance on the Palestinian issue. This raises the question: What does the future hold for Palestine?

Historically, following escalations between Palestinians and Israel, the idea of a two-state solution has been proposed by the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, Arab countries such as Egypt and Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority led by Mahmoud Abbas. These efforts have aimed at dividing Palestinian land into two independent states—Palestine and Israel—to achieve peace between Palestinians and the Israeli regime. However, Islamic movements and Palestinian resistance factions have consistently rejected this, continuing their struggle to expel the occupying Zionists from Palestinian land. The recent Operation Al-Aqsa Storm differs from previous confrontations with Israel in its military, geographical, and temporal aspects.

Given the above factors, it can be argued that the future of Palestine, following Ismail Haniyeh's assassination and the influential presence of a top military figure like Yahya Sinwar in political decision-making, could be profoundly impacted by several factors:

- **Opportunity for National Unity:** As mentioned earlier, Haniyeh's assassination could serve as a pivotal moment for strengthening unity among Palestinian factions. If groups like Fatah and Hamas can reach a common agreement, this unity could bolster the Palestinian position against Israel and in the international community.
- **Shifts in Public Opinion:** The incident could foster greater solidarity and sympathy among the Palestinian people, as well as within the resistance axis and other Muslim communities. For example, in response to Haniyeh's assassination, people in dozens of countries held symbolic funeral prayers and organized protest gatherings. This could increase awareness of the Palestinian situation and support for their rights.



- **Progress in Human Rights:** To prevent further escalation in the Middle East and avoid a global conflict, regional powers might exert pressure on Israel (through sanctions or diplomatic actions) to curb its attempts to escalate the war. This could ultimately lead to improved human rights conditions in Palestine, especially in the occupied territories.
- **Internal Developments in Israel:** Beyond political and military developments, social changes within Israel—where citizens, fearing attacks from Iran and the resistance axis, are seeking to leave the country—could also influence Palestine's future. If the Israeli government, in addition to its hardline policies, faces growing public concerns and pressures, the internal foundations of the Israeli government could weaken and eventually lead to its collapse.
- **Public Opinion and Social Movements:** Public opinion among Palestinians and internationally could be significantly influenced by this incident and its aftermath. This could strengthen social movements, lead to the formation of new social movements, or increase support for Palestinian rights, playing a crucial role in changing the current situation.
- **Military and Retaliatory Reactions:** Hamas or other resistance groups, in response to Haniyeh's assassination and the prominent presence of Yahya Sinwar in the political and military arenas, might intensify their attacks against Israel, escalating tensions in the region.

Considering these factors, and Israel's apparent push for direct confrontation, it is likely that this conflict could continue for several more months. Therefore, the following solutions are proposed...

SOLUTIONS

To resolve the Palestinian issue, ensure global and regional security, and prevent human rights violations, we propose the following solutions:

Temporary Measures: To prevent further escalation in the Middle East and avoid additional human rights violations in Palestine, it is necessary to reach an agreement for a temporary ceasefire. This should include a complete exchange of prisoners between the parties involved.



Permanent Measures: As many countries, particularly Western nations, have concluded, the only viable solution to this conflict is the establishment of two independent states—Palestine and Israel. Therefore, the creation of an independent Palestinian state with clearly defined borders, where Israel has no involvement and which is recognized by all countries, under the administration of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), is essential for the region, especially the Middle East. Without this, it is unlikely that the ongoing conflict will not pose significant future threats to global security.

CONCLUSION

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau, will have significant impacts on the political and security dynamics of the region and the world. This event not only affects the morale and strategy of the Palestinian resistance but also complicates the political and military fronts in the Middle East. The global reactions to this assassination highlight the importance and attention the international community places on the situation in Palestine and the challenges it faces.

Iran, as a key player, may pursue its own security and military scenarios in response to this incident. It could take serious actions that not only challenge the effects of this assassination but also, by increasing coordination with resistance groups in Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq, lead to new developments in the balance of power in the Middle East.

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh has profound impacts on the resistance fronts in Palestine, as clearly reflected in the statements of various leaders and political analyses. This event has not only boosted the morale of Palestinian resistance but also fueled nationalist and anti-Israeli sentiments among the people and resistance groups, increasing tensions and conflicts in the region. It could lead to new developments in the struggle against Israeli occupation and influence regional policies.

Ultimately, this assassination could pave the way for a new era of coordination and unity among the resistance fronts, helping to achieve the ultimate goal of liberating Palestine and confronting Israeli aggression. However, it is important to note that these developments could also exacerbate dissatisfaction and conflicts in the region. Given the current conditions and the demands of the Palestinian people, it seems that the resistance movements will continue on their path to victory and securing their rights. In



the end, all these factors indicate that the war and tensions will persist, and the outcome may be in favor of the Palestinians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the situation in the region and prevent human rights violations in Palestine, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Unity Among Arab and Islamic Countries:** Arab and Islamic countries should strive to achieve multidimensional unity, set aside internal differences, and strengthen their stance against Israel while supporting Palestinian rights.
- **Financial and Economic Support:** Arab and Islamic countries can improve the living conditions of Palestinians by providing financial and economic assistance and ensuring that the vulnerable Palestinian population is well-supported.
- **Active Participation in International Forums:** Arab and Islamic countries should actively participate in international forums, advocate for Palestinian rights, and increase pressure on Israel and the United States to draw global attention to the Palestinian cause.

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Contact Us:Email: info@csrskabul.com - csrskabul@gmail.comWebsite: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.net

Phone & WhatsApp: +93780618000

