

# Palestinian Holocaust Denial

Apr 21, 2000



Brief Analysis

**H**amas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) has recently published a denial of the Jewish Holocaust on its official website. Although Hamas often uses anti-Jewish phrases, this was the first time the organization has officially denied the Holocaust.

## Background

In the 1940s in many parts of the Arab world, there was a great deal of sympathy toward Nazi Germany--but mostly on the grounds of strong anti-British hostility rather than support for Nazi racist doctrines. That said, the then-Palestinian national leader in exile, Haj Amin al-Husseini, sided openly with Nazi Germany and its doctrines, and assisted in recruiting a Muslim battalion of Bosnians for the Nazi war machine. Anti-Jewish riots occurred in Iraq under the pro-German regime of Rashid 'Ali al-Kailani, in Syria under the pro-German Vichy French government, and in Morocco and Tunisia under a combination of Vichy rule and partial German occupation.

During the 1950s and 1960s, anti-Jewish sentiments were heard less in the Arab world, partly under the influence of the good relations that some Arab countries enjoyed with the Soviet Union, where the victory over Nazi Germany played an important ideological role. An additional factor was the emigration of most of the Jewish populations in these countries. More prominent were anti-Israeli or anti-Zionist themes.

The Holocaust is still an unknown issue to most Arabs; it rarely appears in textbooks or educational programs in most Arab countries.

## Arab Holocaust Deniers

In the 1990s, many of the Islamic social and political movements in the Arab world joined the resurgent trend of Holocaust denial among European anti-Semites. This was mainly the result and influence of the persistent activity in this field by Roger Gauroudi, a French scholar and leading European anti-Semite. Gauroudi, a former Christian Marxist and French Communist Party member of the French parliament, converted to Islam following the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. He soon became a prominent figure in promoting anti-Semitism among Islamic movements. But since he was known for his anti-Jewish writings as a Marxist too, he gained the support of many Arab circles beyond the Islamic movements. When he was put on trial and convicted in France for Holocaust denial several years ago, his popularity in Arab and Islamic countries increased. Even the Islamic official establishments in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) supported him. For instance, in 1997, Al-Azhar, the official monthly of the highest Islamic religious authority in Egypt, published sympathetic articles supporting both Gauroudi and his ideas on Jews and Judaism.

## Palestinian Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial

The Islamic establishment of the PA, headed by Shaykh 'Ikrimah Sabri, has taken a strong anti-Jewish tone, but it has so far not been accompanied by a denial of the Holocaust. Instead, the most common claims have been that Israel has used the same methods against the Palestinians as those used by the Nazi Germans against the Jews. Hamas, on the other hand, went much further in its 1988 charter, making a comparison between Jews and the Nazis. Many of

Hamas's pamphlets have included severe anti-Semitic expressions not just against Israelis or Zionists, but against the Jews in general, with such phrases such as "sons of pigs and monkeys" being the most common. The official organ of the movement, the monthly London-based Filastin al-Muslimah, frequently presents anti-Jewish arguments, usually on a religious basis.

But until this recent press release, Hamas had not denied the Holocaust, except perhaps in the leaflets issued by some of its local groups. The statement was released on the Hamas website in Arabic; it was not translated in the English section of the site, probably due to the Western resentment of such ideas. Hamas issued the press release in reaction to the Stockholm conference on the Jewish Holocaust, held in late January 2000, in which several heads of state and officials from many countries participated. The conference emphasized the need to fight the phenomenon of total or partial Holocaust denial by political movements, historians, or anti-Semitic groups and individuals on an international level.

The Hamas press release represents an escalation in the organization's rhetoric and a hardening of its position toward Israel. But it is also important to view this statement in the context of the declining support by the Palestinian public for Hamas in general and the group's terrorist activity in particular.

An excerpt of this press release follows. It is taken from the official website of Hamas ([www.palestine-info.org](http://www.palestine-info.org)) and is translated from the original Arabic:

Following the special international conference in Stockholm concerning the alleged Jewish Holocaust during World War II, a senior leading member of The Islamic Resistance Movement-- Hamas--states the following:

This conference bears a clear Zionist goal, aimed at forging history by hiding the truth about the so-called Holocaust, which is an alleged and invented story with no basis. . . . The invention of these grand illusions of an alleged crime that never occurred, ignoring the millions of dead European victims of Nazism during the war, clearly reveals the racist Zionist face, which believes in the superiority of the Jewish race over the rest of the nations.

Not only does this attempt to focus on an alleged story ignore the suffering of our people and disregard the massacres committed by the Zionists against them, such as Dir Yasin, Kafr Qasem, Tanturah, Jerusalem, Hebron and Sabra and Shatila--not to mention the massacres committed by the enemy against the people of our nation, such as in Bahr al-Baqr and Qana, the killing of thousands of Egyptian captives, and so on--but the story itself has no proof. . . . The Zionist entity is using psychological and ideological terrorism through the Stockholm conference and the alleged Nazi Holocaust. . . .

We call the free scholars of the world and its vital forces to expose the crimes of global Zionism against our people, our nation, and against all human civilization, and to refute them and not to fear the hostility of the Jews and their ideological terrorism or their influence through which they shut mouths and prevent objective, unbiased scholars from revealing the Zionist claims as lies. By these methods, the Jews in the world flout scientific methods of research whenever that research contradicts their racist interests.

Reuven Paz is a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute and the academic director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Inter-Disciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel.

Policy #255

---

**RECOMMENDED**

---

## BRIEF ANALYSIS

### Bennett's Bahrain Visit Further Invigorates Israel-Gulf Diplomacy

Feb 14, 2022



Simon Henderson

(/policy-analysis/bennetts-bahrain-visit-further-invigorates-israel-gulf-diplomacy)

## BRIEF ANALYSIS

### Libya's Renewed Legitimacy Crisis

Feb 14, 2022



Ben Fishman

(/policy-analysis/libyas-renewed-legitimacy-crisis)



## BRIEF ANALYSIS

### The UAE Formally Ceases to be a Tax-Free Haven

Feb 14, 2022



Sana Quadri,  
Hamdullah Baycar

(/policy-analysis/uae-formally-ceases-be-tax-free-haven)

## TOPICS

Arab-Israeli Relations (/policy-analysis/arab-israeli-relations)

Peace Process (/policy-analysis/peace-process)

## REGIONS & COUNTRIES

Palestinians (/policy-analysis/palestinians)