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“The Resistance Will Continue,” Hamas Pledges Amid Gaza Ceasefire Talks

Hamas and Israel may make a limited deal on Gaza, but the war for the future of Palestine will intensify

A reflection shows a woman walking past a poster in a shop window featuring a fighter of the Al-Qassam Brigades. Photo by Ahmad Al-Rubaye/AFP via Getty

Hamas and Israel appear closer to some form of a Gaza ceasefire deal than at any time since the brief truce last November. CIA Director William Burns and White House envoy Brett McGurk traveled to the Middle East this week for negotiations with Israeli delegations led by David Barnea, the head of the Mossad, and Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, as well as the head of Egyptian intelligence and the prime minister of Qatar. The two Arab nations maintain direct communication with Hamas negotiators.

Hamas has shown a willingness to compromise on major issues in recent weeks. Hamas officials, including those on its negotiating team, have said they generally accept the principles of a phased peace plan endorsed by the White House. “We are ready for negotiations that achieve a cessation of aggression and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip,” said senior negotiator Khalil Al-Hayya, a deputy of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. “We are ready for genuine negotiations if [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu adheres to the principles outlined by President [Joe] Biden.”

This is part 2 in my ongoing series covering Hamas’s perspective on the war on Gaza. [Read Part 1](#), and subscribe to get the rest.

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Hamas is considering an approach that would not immediately require a commitment to a permanent ceasefire and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza as a precondition to

move forward in phased negotiations. This would mark a significant concession by Hamas, which has long insisted any agreement must include defined steps that end Israel's war. Instead, Hamas officials said, they would consider entering an initial six-week phase that would include a conditional ceasefire and an exchange of Israeli civilian and female soldiers held in Gaza in return for the release of hundreds of Palestinians. It would also allow desperately needed aid to enter Gaza and include a pullback of Israeli forces from several areas of the Strip and expanded freedom of movement.

Some Hamas officials have sought to downplay the shift to Drop Site News, emphasizing that Hamas's ultimate goal remains a permanent ceasefire and complete withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza. They stress that these discussions with mediators deal with a preliminary framework that would govern the negotiations.

Netanyahu has made clear he does not want a lasting deal with Hamas and has repeatedly poured kerosene on the fire by doubling down on his pledge to achieve "total victory" in Gaza. "There are those who ask how long the campaign will continue," Netanyahu said in a speech Thursday. "I say two words: Until victory. Until victory, even if it takes time." On Sunday, the Israeli leader said any deal with Hamas must "allow Israel to return to fighting until its war aims are achieved."

The next day, the head of Hamas's political bureau Ismail Haniyeh said, "Netanyahu and his army will be fully responsible" if no deal is reached. "While Hamas is offering flexibility and positivity to facilitate reaching an agreement to stop the Zionist aggression, Netanyahu is placing more obstacles to the negotiations, escalating his aggression and crimes against our people, and intensifying his attempts to forcibly displace them in order to thwart all efforts to reach an agreement," Hamas said in a statement released Monday.

"We are ready for negotiations that achieve a cessation of aggression and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip."

A senior adviser to Hamas's negotiating team said Hamas has discussed with mediators amending its stance on the ceasefire framework to "provide a basis for mediators to continue negotiations." In return, he said, Hamas wants the international guarantors—the U.S., Egypt and Qatar—to secure a clear commitment from Israel to preserve a ceasefire as negotiations move to a second stage. Hamas negotiators would aim to secure a permanent ceasefire. Israel maintains it wants to reserve the right to exit any deal after the first stage, during which it wants the return of a "maximum" number of the 116 Israelis believed to be held in Gaza, and resume its military assault.

This second phase of the deal would be the most sensitive for Israel because it also envisions a complete withdrawal of Israeli ground forces from Gaza. It would also pose risks for Hamas because its most valuable bargaining chips—the remaining Israelis held captive in Gaza, including soldiers—could all be returned to Israel in exchange for prisoners Hamas considers high value. But Hamas has emphasized that the framework is not the final deal and much can change once detailed negotiations commence.

Accentuating the regional stakes at play, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised speech this week, “Hamas is negotiating on its own behalf and on behalf of the entire resistance axis, and what Hamas accepts, we accept.”

Hamas’s strategic calculus, at this juncture, is that a pause in Israel’s war combined with an exchange of some captives and an influx of humanitarian assistance may allow for a more robust agreement to take shape—particularly if pressure on Netanyahu intensifies from the U.S. and E.U. “We need a full ceasefire to end the war in Gaza, to stop this madness on Gaza, and at the same time full withdrawal from Gaza. I think Israel tried to escape from this issue for a long time. They want to keep Gaza open for their military operations, like in the West Bank,” a Hamas negotiator told me. “This is the problem.”

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Political Futures

While the focus of mediators in Qatar and Egypt is centered on resolving sharp divisions over concrete issues, a cloud of politics hovers over the entire process. Not in Gaza, but in Washington, D.C., and Tel Aviv. Both Biden and Netanyahu’s political futures are woven into any agreements made to pause or end Israel’s scorched earth war against the Palestinians of Gaza. Netanyahu’s future—and his idealized vision of his historic legacy—depends on continuing the war, and Biden’s on ending it.

For nine months, Biden’s reelection campaign has watched as support for his candidacy has hemorrhaged, including among young Americans who have formed the core of campus uprisings against the Gaza war. The administration has had a series of contentious interactions with Arab American leaders and major anti-war protests are planned at the Democratic National Convention next month. The campaign may hope that Biden can recoup some support if he is seen as ending Israel’s genocidal war, but his facilitation of that war combined with mounting questions about his mental acumen will remain a formidable problem. “Look at the [poll] numbers in Israel. I mean, my numbers are better in Israel than they are here,” President Biden joked during a rare press conference Thursday.

“The United States looks enormously feeble. I mean, talk about the tail wagging the dog.”

Prior to the October 7 attacks, Netanyahu's grip on power was in a state of decline, as he faced numerous scandals and legal battles that left open the prospect not only of political defeat but a potential prison sentence. The extent to which [Hamas was able to penetrate Israeli territory](#) during Operation Al-Aqsa Flood—overtaking multiple military facilities and kibbutzim—remains an incendiary issue in Israel. So, too, does Netanyahu's failure to secure the return of the overwhelming majority of hostages held in Gaza because of his insistence on prioritizing Gaza's obliteration over diplomacy.

But Netanyahu's motives for continuing the war extend beyond electoral politics. His political vocation has centered on one primary theme: preventing the establishment of a unified Palestinian state and imposing ruthless domination over the Palestinian people who refuse to submit to apartheid. Netanyahu needs the war to continue not only to save his political career, but because he believes he will win.

Hamas officials told me they do not have any illusions that Biden is wavering in his support for Israel's overarching posture toward Palestinians generally and Hamas specifically. Instead, they attribute the diplomatic push for a deal to politics and larger U.S. goals in the Middle East. "The United States, they want Gaza to be calmed because they know that what is going on in Gaza is connected to south Lebanon, to the Red Sea, to different regions. So they want the Middle East to be calm in order to prepare for the normalization with Saudi Arabia and for the election in the United States," the negotiator added. "Until now they did not [work] very hard to pressure Israel to stop the war in Gaza."

The Hamas senior advisor assessed that the fact that Biden is facing a tough reelection campaign may hinder the U.S. ability to influence Netanyahu.

Supporting a temporary ceasefire in the hope it will pave the way for a comprehensive deal poses risks for Biden. Netanyahu could resume the war at any moment and has displayed an eagerness to discard even the mildest criticism from the administration. If Netanyahu's strategy is to string out multi-phased negotiations with Hamas through November's U.S. elections in the hope that Donald Trump will defeat Biden, then any temporary agreement Israel makes with Hamas would be a paper tiger.

There is little doubt that Biden could have ended the war long ago by publicly and privately demanding it and using the full power of the White House to do so. He has not only refused to do this, but has continued to offer sweeping statements about the ironclad nature of U.S. support for Israel.

The only other plausible action Biden could take to halt the war—and potentially reap some electoral benefits—would be a strategically-focused cut off of military support and weapons

resupplies to Israel if Netanyahu insists on moving forward. Netanyahu would undoubtedly seek to exploit such a move to bolster Trump's candidacy; he has already repeatedly [exaggerated the impact](#) of the White House's symbolic delay in delivering a small number of 2,000- and 500-pound bombs to Israel. Biden has given no indication he would consider such a move and this week the U.S. resumed shipments of the 500-pound munitions. The administration's decisions have led Biden to a place where he is facilitating the continuation of a war he claims he wants to end.

"The United States looks enormously feeble. I mean, talk about the tail wagging the dog," said Rashid Khalidi, author of *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*. "Netanyahu is running American policy. Netanyahu decides, and Biden follows along like a puppy dog. That's the way it looks to much of the world."

Benjamin Netanyahu hugs Joe Biden upon his arrival at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport on October 18, 2023. Photo: Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty

"There Is No Future Without Hamas"

Hamas does not view the current war in Gaza as a nine-or-ten-month event that will end, even with a "permanent" ceasefire. October 7 was, in Hamas's view, a historic battle in a 76-year liberation struggle against Israeli occupation and apartheid. The central objective of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood was to [shatter the status quo](#), not just on Gaza, but on the Israeli and Western approach to Palestinian self-determination and an independent state. Hamas has made clear it will not accept defeat in a genocidal war and retreat to the dustbin of history.

While the immediate focus is on achieving agreement on a framework for pausing or ending Israel's military attacks and exchanging captives, there are existential issues for Hamas's political future that will swiftly rise from the rubble and devastation in Gaza. The central question is: How would a political resolution to this acute crisis impact the future of Hamas and the struggle for Palestinian liberation?

Ghazi Hamad, a member of Hamas's negotiating committee, said that short of the U.S. government leading a radical shift in Western posture toward Palestine, the past nine months will serve as a prelude to a reconfiguration of politics that more openly embraces armed struggle. "The resistance will continue, will not stop in Gaza or in the West Bank or everywhere until we end the occupation because we don't want to live like slaves under

occupation forever,” he told me. “If Mr. Joe Biden is smart and understands the situation very well, you have to think deeply how to end the occupation.”

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The U.S. and E.U. have stated they oppose any role for Hamas in governing Gaza. “We have said consistently that Hamas should not be either a political or a governing body,” said Jack Lew, U.S. ambassador to Israel, in May, echoing comments from Biden and other senior administration officials. Biden has said publicly he wants Hamas eliminated entirely.

For months, the White House has been scrambling to put together a plan for “post-war Gaza.” According to a secret State Department document obtained by [Politico](#), the administration is weighing the appointment of a U.S. adviser to help coordinate a security force consisting of Palestinians and personnel from several Arab nations, including Egypt, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates. The U.S. adviser, according to the report, would not be on the ground in Gaza.

“We got to think through what is happening after Gaza, after this is over? Who's going to occupy Gaza?” Biden said in an [interview with CNN](#) in May. “I've been working with the Arab states. I won't mention them because I don't want to get them in trouble, but five leaders in the Arab community who are prepared to help rebuild Gaza, prepared to help transition to a two-state solution.” Biden added that the goal would be “to maintain the security and peace while they're working out a Palestinian authority that's real and not corrupt.”

Netanyahu has publicly rejected Biden's suggestion, [floated](#) early in the war, that “Gaza and the West Bank should be reunited under a single governance structure, ultimately under a revitalized Palestinian Authority.” Netanyahu has insisted that Israel maintain the capacity for full-spectrum dominance and control of Gaza.

Dr. Yara Hawari, a co-director at the Palestinian think tank Al-Shabaka, believes Netanyahu's rejection of the Palestinian Authority is, in part, political posturing. The PA, she said, has served Israel's interests by acting as a force of political repression and as a convenient stand-in for an independent Palestinian government that has the support of the Palestinian population. “No one wants to see the PA gone except for the Palestinians,” she said. “The Europeans, the donor community, the Israelis, the Americans, they all have vested interests in making sure that the PA remains and remains strong.” It is also plausible that part of Netanyahu's opposition to any role for the PA in Gaza is related to his broader divide and

conquer strategy that would force the creation of another entity to deal with Gaza and further dissipate Palestinian political cohesion.

“We completely reject any talk about the day after the aggression,” [said](#) a Hamas spokesperson Ahmed Abdel Hadi. “Managing the Gaza Strip after defeating this fascist aggression is a purely Palestinian matter.”

Hamas does not want the current iteration of the PA to be assigned control of Gaza. Mouin Rabbani, a former UN official who worked as a special adviser on Israel-Palestine for the International Crisis Group, said that in addition to the PA’s long history of political repression against Palestinians and the perception that it is effectively an agent of the Israeli occupation, Mahmoud Abbas and other PA leaders have largely remained silent in the face of Israel’s genocide in Gaza. “The Palestinian Authority has been reduced to an impotent spectator,” he told me. “We’ve probably seen more statements about what’s going on in Gaza emerging from Johannesburg, from London, probably even from Prague, than we have seen from Ramallah,” the headquarters of the PA.

The contrast between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority could not be more stark. From its inception, Hamas sought to position itself as a more militant alternative to Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which Hamas characterized as having abandoned its revolutionary agenda after officially pivoting in 1988 to support for a two-state solution. While Yasser Arafat began negotiating with the Israelis and conceded the loss of large swaths of historic Palestine, Hamas openly stated its goal was liberation of all Palestinian lands through armed struggle.

In the ensuing decades, as the PA presided over what many saw as a Palestinian Bantustan, Hamas’s popularity rose, culminating in its historic 2006 electoral victory in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, not just Gaza. By 2007, it had violently kicked Fatah out of Gaza and consolidated its official control of the Strip. Fatah engaged in a coup of its own, seizing political control of the West Bank and reclaiming the PA. Hamas’s victory was met with denunciations from the U.S. and other Western powers and Israel imposed a deadly blockade and began what it called “mowing the lawn”—keeping Gazans in check through periodic air strikes and bombing campaigns.

Hamas’s stature was elevated not only through its periodic rocket attacks against Israel, but also by its ability to win freedom for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel through its tactical abductions of Israeli soldiers. Last November, the world watched as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, an armed resistance movement established in 1981, presided over the release of hundreds of Palestinians, many of whom had been jailed as children, in exchange for

Israeli captives taken on October 7. In addition to civilian captives, Hamas continues to hold a significant number of Israeli soldiers in Gaza and the group believes it can leverage them to free not only more Palestinian civilians, but also members of Hamas and other armed factions.

“If we can today have our independent Palestinian state on ’67 borders, preserving the right of return, yes, we will accept this. We will be part of this. We will never block it.”

As Hamas has grown in popularity, especially in the West Bank, Abbas and the PA have experienced a dramatic plunge in support. An [independent poll](#) published July 10 found that 94 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and 83 percent in Gaza think Abbas should resign. The poll, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, determined that nearly two-thirds of Palestinians in the occupied territories want the PA to be dissolved. “The Palestinian Authority has taken it upon itself during this period to continue arresting, threatening, to make sure that the status quo in the West Bank, or at least in Ramallah, remains the same,” said Hawari. “No one ever has anything good to say about the PA except for the PA loyalist thugs that are paid, that are on payroll.”

Support among Palestinians for Hamas and its Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar, according to the recent poll, “remains very high” and has increased during the past three months. At the same time, while two-thirds of Palestinians polled in the occupied territories believe that Hamas will “win the war,” only 48 percent of those in Gaza agreed.

Hamas has insisted the war cannot destroy its movement and will remain part of the tapestry of Palestinian factions governing its besieged and occupied territories. “What matters is that you finally realize that Hamas is here. That it exists. That there is no future without Hamas, there is no possible deal whatsoever, because we are part and parcel of this society, even if we lose the next elections,” Sinwar [warned](#) in 2018. “But we are a piece of Palestine. More than that, we are a piece of the history of the entire Arab world, which includes Islamists as well as seculars, nationalists, leftists.”

Even some senior Israeli officials have indicated they believe eliminating Hamas by force is an unachievable goal. “Hamas is an idea, Hamas is a political party. It is rooted in the hearts of people—whoever thinks we can eliminate Hamas is mistaken,” said the chief IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari in June. “If we don’t bring something else to Gaza, at the end of the day we will get Hamas.” But Hagari is not in charge of Israeli policy and some influential Israelis believe they can in fact eradicate ideas through genocidal force.

What State Solution?

Basem Naim, a senior member of Hamas's political bureau and a former minister in the Hamas government, said the group remains firm in its commitment to achieving a unified Palestinian state. "To be honest with you, we believe that Palestine, from the river to the sea, 27,000+ [square] kilometers is Palestinian property and ownership. There is no right for any other group of people to be there except those Palestinians, regardless [of if they are] Muslims, Jews, Christians, who were there before 1948. And we will fight to get all this historical Palestine free from the empire, colonial apartheid regime," he told me. "We will discuss all Palestinians who are living in Palestine, regardless of their religion or ethnicity, to decide about the future of this state."

Naim said, however, that Hamas would respect the democratic will of the Palestinian people on the question of a two-state settlement. "If we have a Palestinian consensus, that if the international community can help us to have an independent, sovereign state on '67 borders, with Al-Quds, Jerusalem, as the capital, preserving the right of return, we in Hamas, we will not block or we will not undermine this option or this chance. We will help other Palestinians, we will be part of this solution," he said. "But this has nothing to do with our vision that we are still looking for the whole Palestine as a Palestinian entity, as a Palestinian ownership. But if we can today have our independent Palestinian state on '67 borders, preserving the right of return, yes, we will accept this. We will be part of this. We will never block it."

"These people, they are fighting against the wind. They are wasting their time because the Palestinians will not be broken."

As for what type of government Hamas would like to see in an independent Palestine, "We believe in a civil state. We are not believing in a theological state, so-called theological state," Naim said. "We believe that this is the right of each Palestinian, after having our state, to decide the identity and the constitution of the state."

Rabbani said that Naim's characterization of Hamas's position—essentially we will neither endorse nor prevent a two-state solution—is a tactical one, reflected in Hamas's revised charter released in 2017. "It was actually pretty clever because they were basically saying, 'We're pure, okay? But if either the national institutions or the people themselves want to sully their hands through a peace agreement with Israel, well, if the rest of Palestine isn't as pure as we are, we'll just have to accept that.' And that was their indirect way of endorsing a two-state settlement," he said. "I think the question that needs to be asked, and perhaps it's premature to answer it, is how have the last nine months affected this view?"

Naim gave some indication of the answer to that question when he laid out what Hamas sees as the political trap Palestinians enter when they express openness to a two-state resolution. “The question is, what should I recognize? Are there clear borders of the state of Israel today? Can you tell me the borders of the state of Israel? Should I recognize Israel as the Jewish state?” he asked. “Do you know that when I recognize Israel as a Jewish state, I am undermining the existence of 2 million Palestinians inside Israel? Because if I recognize Israel as a Jewish state and I give Israel the right to deal with this group of people, Jews, as a superclass in the society, it means that I am undermining the existence and the rights of my own people, 2 million Palestinians inside Israel.”

“It is unfair to ask the victims who are squeezed in the corner to recognize the oppressor,” Naim said, adding that should Palestinians achieve a state through a negotiated settlement, it would need to have clearly enforceable commitments from the U.S. and other powerful nations to restrain Israel. “We should ask for guarantees that this [Palestinian] state will be protected from the other party because they have all the capability and all the facilities to reoccupy it again. You cannot compare the Gaza Strip or West Bank with these limited facilities, some policemen with a few pistols or Kalashnikovs, with a super regional power. And we see exactly today how they can not only reoccupy the Gaza Strip, but how they can smash the Gaza Strip and kill all the people there.”

Hamad, a prominent member of Hamas’s political bureau, offered a bleak outlook for a negotiated resolution on Palestinian statehood. “I think peace with Israel is impossible. It is impossible because I think these people, they don’t want the Palestinians to be in Palestine. They want to expel us outside. So we just [have] one alternative: resistance against occupation,” he said. “These people, they are fighting against the wind. They are wasting their time because the Palestinians will not be broken. They should understand that you used all things against the Palestinians—military, assassination, killing, settlements, confiscating their lands—they did everything against the Palestinians. But no one raised the white flag and said, ‘Now we recognize Israel and we will live under the flag of Israel.’ They should understand this equation, that the Palestinians will never quit, will never give up.”

Khalidi said that Hamas has proven adept at shaking Israeli society to its core and of achieving tactical victories on the ground in Gaza against a far more powerful adversary, notably one which has enjoyed the backing of the most powerful nation on earth. But retaining official power with broad backing from Palestinians is a different beast altogether, he told me.

“Where are they going? What is their ultimate objective? Do they really want to liberate all of Palestine by war? Is that really their objective militarily? Do they really believe that all of Palestine is a *waqf*, an inalienable trust for the Muslims, none of which can be ceded? Well, if that’s what they believe, then how do they intend to deal with the Israelis, which is this nuclear superpower, which is this people that has been created through this process of ethnic cleansing and settler colonialism?” Rashidi asked. “If war is the extension of politics by other means, what is your politics?”

Khalidi questions whether a consensus exists, even among Hamas’s leadership. “I’m not sure that there’s any kind of cohesion among Hamas leaders over this. There were different opinions within the PLO from the ’70s, when they started shifting to a two-state solution, until 1988, when they finally adopted it. And I’m sure there are differences within Hamas, but how and in which direction they resolve this will determine a lot about the future of Hamas. Also, how this war ends will determine a lot about the future of Hamas.”

Hamad said that Hamas’s relations with other Palestinian factions had been growing stronger in the years leading up to October 7 and have become tighter over the past nine months as the group has battled Israeli forces in Gaza. Hamas hopes this can translate into a national unity movement. “The relationship between Hamas and the other Palestinian factions like People’s Front, Democratic Front, and Islamic Jihad and every faction of the Palestinians is very good. It is better than their relationship with [Abbas’s ruling party] Fatah.”

The Biden administration has heavily emphasized that part of ending the war in Gaza is establishing a viable path to a “two-state solution.” While Hamas is on record as keeping that option open, Rabbani believes it is, in real political terms, a dead end. “Many who previously believed that a two-state settlement was feasible no longer believe it is desirable that they simply say, ‘We cannot coexist with this genocidal apartheid state and there cannot be a sustainable peace in the Middle East until this regime is dismantled.’ That’s my sense of it.”

Rabbani said that he has seen no indication that either the U.S. or E.U. are prepared to use their leverage to compel Israel to alter its policies to such a degree that it would give Palestinians any faith in such negotiations. “When I hear Western politicians talk about two-state settlement, it’s kind of holding out that fake rabbit in front of the greyhound at the racetrack so that he keeps running faster in the wrong direction,” Rabbani said. “It’s a complete charade.”

“Without resolving the Palestinian issue, there is no future for Israel. This war really has to be the last war.”

Gershon Baskin, an Israeli negotiator with extensive experience dealing with Hamas, said he does not believe any future Israeli government, liberal or conservative, would accept a role for Hamas. “The only acceptable model will be an alternative Palestinian leadership that does not include Hamas directly, nor an armed Hamas on the ground,” he said. “The model of Hezbollah, where they don’t run the government but they essentially control the country of Lebanon, is not going to be accepted by Israel or by the United States. I don’t think that kind of model will be able to get any money from the international community to rebuild Gaza.”

But Baskin is more optimistic about a two-state settlement, crediting the October 7 attacks with inadvertently resurrecting the possibility. “It’s back on the table. I thought it was dead. For the last years, I’ve been talking to Israelis and Palestinians about alternatives to a two-state solution, and all of a sudden it’s back in front of us,” he said. “And more countries are recognizing the state of Palestine. And I believe that it will sink deeper into the Israeli mindset as well, that this is what has to happen. It’s not there yet. We’re not there yet. We still have no prominent leaders in Israel talking about peace. It’s not part of the political debate here.”

Baskin said he maintains hope that broader sectors of Israeli society, and political leaders, will recognize this moment as an existential crossroads and choose a political solution. “If, God forbid, we go in the other direction, then it’s not only the demise of the status and the lives of Palestinians, but it is the destruction of Israel,” he said. “Without resolving the Palestinian issue, there is no future for Israel. This war really has to be the last war. It simply makes no sense for anyone here to continue the path that we’re on.”

A third intifada could emerge if Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad organized it. While that has not happened, on July 10, Hamas did issue a call for Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank to “escalate the clash with the occupation soldiers and settlers,” in protest of the abuse of Palestinian prisoners.

If a large enough sector of Palestinians determine there is no other path to deal with the apartheid regime, Rabbani said, popular support for a broader insurrection may take hold. “I think Hamas has been given massive credit by a very significant proportion of Palestinians for inflicting what Israelis themselves are calling the most serious blow in their history. For those Palestinians who were waiting for Israel to be taught a lesson, they weren’t looking at Gaza and Hamas. They were waiting for Hezbollah to unleash its capacities. And to think that Hamas was able to achieve even more than people hoped to see from Hezbollah has made a huge impact on Palestinians,” Rabbani said. “I think for many Palestinians, if you support Palestinian resistance, whether armed resistance or popular resistance or diplomatic

resistance or whatever you want to call it, there is no Palestinian alternative to Hamas and Islamic Jihad.”

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