

Iran's vision for Jerusalem's 'Liberation' - A strategic threat to Israel

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 26.05.2025

As Israel celebrates Jerusalem Day - marking the historic return of Jerusalem, the capital of the ancient Kingdom of David, to full Jewish sovereignty after two thousand years - it is crucial to recall Iran's openly declared ambition to destroy Israel and "liberate" Jerusalem, with the Al-Aqsa Mosque as its symbolic centerpiece. This aspiration was vividly illustrated in a provocative poster published in May 2020 by the office of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, under the chilling title "The Final Solutio" - a term borrowed directly from Nazi Germany's lexicon.

The poster depicts armed terrorists from various Iran Quds Force-backed militias gathering triumphantly in Jerusalem, having supposedly succeeded in eliminating Israel. Visible among them are operatives from Hezbollah, Hamas, the Fatemiyoun Brigade, and Iraqi Shiite militias holding images of Jamal Abu al-Mohandes, the Kata'ib Hezbollah commander killed alongside Qassem Soleimani in January 2020. These militants operate under the ideological influence of Khomeini, Khamenei, Soleimani, Abu al-Mohandes, [late Hamas founder] Ahmed Yassin, and [late Hezbollah number 2] Imad Mughniyeh, whose portraits adorn their vehicles.

In May 2021, about a year after the release of that poster, then-Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah introduced a new strategic equation: Any Israeli action deemed a "violation of Jerusalem" would justify a regional war. In a speech delivered just days after the end of Operation Guardian of the Walls, Nasrallah signaled his intent to join a future multi-front campaign against Israel, drawing upon the emotionally charged religious symbolism of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa. He declared:

"Israelis must understand that whoever harms the sanctities of Islam will not face only the resistance in Gaza. The new equation after the last confrontation is that anyone who attacks Jerusalem or Al-Aqsa will face a full-scale armed resistance...

Gaza surprised its allies and enemies alike by entering the battle in response to actions in Jerusalem... The historic shift in the 'Sword of Jerusalem' campaign was that Gaza went to war to defend Jerusalem—not itself."

Khamenei's poster was neither symbolic nor coincidental. In a speech delivered in November 2023, six weeks after the outbreak of the current war, IRGC Commander Hossein Salami called for a repeat of the October 7 massacre - this time in a more sophisticated fashion and launched from the east, south, and north - with the aim of destroying Israel. For decades, Iran's regime has used "International Quds Day" (instituted by Khomeini on the last Friday of Ramadan) to incite crowds in Tehran, Gaza, Beirut, Baghdad, Sana'a, and elsewhere to chant, "Death to Israel."

The October 7 massacre carried out by Hamas served as irrefutable evidence - if any was still needed - that Israel must take its enemies' threats with absolute seriousness. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that Tehran has been actively developing a detailed operational plan to destroy Israel for at least the past seven years. In 2018, senior Iranian official Hossein Amir-Abdollahian - who later served as foreign minister under President Raisi and was killed alongside him in a 2024 helicopter crash - declared that Iran had a concrete plan to implement Khamenei's 2015 directive to wipe Israel off the map within 25 years.

In addition to addressing Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israel must consider the threat of a mass-casualty assault aimed at its destruction with the gravity it demands. In fact, late Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar described the future attack with remarkable clarity in a speech to thousands in Gaza on December 17, 2022. He declared: "We will come at you, God willing, in a roaring flood. We will come at you with endless quantities of rockets. We will come at you with a limitless tide of fighters. We will come at you with millions of our people, again and again." Given this, Israel must regard Salami's call for a more advanced and comprehensive massacre attack as a credible threat. This is especially true in light of reports that, during the war, circles in Tehran considered the possibility of launching ground invasions of Israel from Syria (prior to former president Bashar Assad's removal) and from Jordan.

Israel must work systematically to deny its enemies both the capability and the motivation to carry out such plans. This requires a proactive and offensive strategy targeting the Iranian regime and its regional proxies. Simultaneously,

Israel must complete the construction of its border with Jordan and take advantage of diplomatic opportunities in the region to prevent Iran from entrenching its presence and expanding its influence. Such opportunities may arise in light of significant regional changes, foremost among them the ousting of the Assad regime in Syria and the weakening of Hezbollah's position and power in Lebanon.

Another major lesson from the current war is the urgent need to strengthen Israel's defense independence by developing an advanced domestic military industry. Reliance on weapons systems, ammunition, and equipment from foreign powers - especially the United States - leaves Israel vulnerable, often awaiting critical supplies or facing constraints tied to political considerations that do not necessarily align with its national security interests. Israel must create a robust and sovereign industrial and technological base, enabling rapid, precise, and independent responses to security threats - guided by a clear strategic imperative: Protecting its citizens, even when that requires decisions made without external approval or support.

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