

The Israel-Saudi Arabia Normalization: A motive for the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre reflected in documents from the Gaza Strip

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Overview¹

- ▶ Since the 2020 Abraham Accords between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain, there has been a United States-led effort to promote a normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Senior Hamas figures and the movement's media outlets warned that such a development would pose a danger to the Palestinian cause. Hamas publications following the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre confirmed that preventing normalization was one of the attack's objectives.
- ▶ Hamas documents² brought back by IDF forces from the Gaza Strip during the Gaza Strip War showed that the Hamas leadership closely monitored the progress of normalization contacts between Israel and Saudi Arabia from their inception and regarded the entire process as a real danger and a strategic threat which contradicted its worldview. The movement placed the issue of normalization at the center of its agenda, conducted assessments of the situation, allocated resources to combating the process in various arenas of activity and formulated a series of recommendations for sabotaging it.
- ▶ The understanding that took shape within the Hamas leadership, led by the movement's leader in the Gaza Strip, Yahya al-Sinwar, was that normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel would open the door for other Arab states to join the process in a manner that would eliminate the Palestinian cause and remove it from the Arab and international agenda.
- ▶ Hamas' struggle against normalization received backing from senior Iranian regime officials, particularly after Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021. Even after the highly publicized rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran during 2023, senior officials in Tehran made efforts to reassure the concerned Hamas leadership and emphasize their opposition to possible normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

² Most of the complete captured Hamas documents appearing in this study are available for public review in the archive of the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center (IHC).

► Although Hamas' internal assessments were sharply critical of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and al-Sinwar claimed bin Salman's motivation was to enhance his image in the region, the explicit directive was to avoid damaging relations with Saudi Arabia and to conduct the struggle against normalization firmly, wisely, and without committing political suicide.

► On the eve of the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre, the Hamas leadership decided that as part of efforts to prevent normalization, action should be taken to escalate tensions and ignite the situation in Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem, while emphasizing the message of a "danger to al-Aqsa Mosque." Al-Sinwar declared that an unconventional move had to be made which would rattle Israel and halt the process.

► **In Amit Institute assessment, Hamas regarded the progress of normalization as a fatal blow to the Palestinian cause which would weaken the movement and diminish its role in the "resistance axis."³ Hamas attempted to fight the process in various ways and divided its efforts among various areas. Yahya al-Sinwar led the struggle against normalization and believed that igniting the situation on the ground and using the narrative of a "threat to al-Aqsa" as an accelerant could achieve the desired results. However, as time passed, he concluded that the only alternative was to undertake an unconventional course of action to halt the normalization process, which he believed was approaching maturation.**

Background

The Efforts to Promote Normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia⁴

► Normalization talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia began unofficially during 2019 and 2020. After the Abraham Accords between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain were signed in September 2020, the contacts accelerated with direct American involvement and began receiving public attention in the media. It was revealed in November 2020 that a meeting had taken place in Saudi Arabia between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Israeli

³ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

⁴ For further information, see [Leveraging the Prospect of Israel-Saudi Normalization; to Advance Israeli-Palestinian Progress – Israel Policy Forum](#) and [Possible U.S.-Saudi Agreements and Normalization with Israel](#)

Prime Minister Netanyahu and the head of the Israeli Mossad, with the American secretary of state in attendance (Israeli media, November 22-23, 2020).

► After the Biden administration took office in January 2021, efforts to promote normalization intensified as part of a broader initiative aimed at establishing a regional alliance against Iran which would include cooperation between Israel and the Gulf States. In July 2022 Saudi Arabia allowed Israeli flights access to its airspace for the first time (*Haaretz*, July 15, 2022). In August 2023, American sources expressed cautious optimism that a normalization agreement could be achieved within nine to ten months after an understanding had been reached between the United States and Saudi Arabia regarding guiding principles (*Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 2023).

Hamis' Public Positions

► Although Hamas leaders were deeply troubled by the progress of the normalization process, they generally did not issue negative public statements on the subject or directly attack Saudi Arabia to keep from creating public tension with the kingdom and causing political damage to Hamas' interests, given their understanding of Saudi Arabia's important regional role. In the limited public comments made by Hamas figures against normalization, they mainly emphasized the dangers of the process and its negative implications for both the Palestinian cause and the Arab and Islamic peoples, such as the following:

◆ Isma'il Haniyeh,⁵ head of Hamas' political bureau, stated during the Arab-Islamic National Conference in Beirut that "normalization harms Palestine and the countries participating in the normalization process and serves the Zionist entity." He added that "the Israeli entity is being integrated into the region through military alliances in order to confront Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas," and called for alliances among the members of the Islamic nation and coordination among the arenas and "resistance" fronts to prevent Israel from shaping the future of the region (Al Jazeera, June 26, 2022).

⁵ Eliminated on July 30, 2024.



Haniyeh at the Arab-Islamic National Conference in Beirut (Al Jazeera, June 26, 2022)

◆ In response, senior Hamas figure Isma'il Radwan said, "Normalization is a treacherous stab in the back of our people, and encourages the occupation to commit further crimes against our holy sites, al-Aqsa Mosque and the Palestinian people. It encourages the occupation's colonial ambitions for 'Greater Israel,' from the Nile to the Euphrates. Those are dangers threatening our Arab and Islamic nation. The Arab nation should end what is called normalization with the Zionist occupation and awaken to the danger threatening the region, both for the regimes themselves and for the Arab and Islamic peoples, just as it is a danger to our cause" (Al Jazeera, June 26, 2022).

◆ In August 2023, at the height of the normalization contacts, Hamas deputy political bureau chief Saleh al-Arouri⁶ said, "We hope the reports regarding Saudi normalization with Israel will dissipate and nothing will materialize, because this [normalization with Saudi Arabia] is different from any other country and means handing over the holy places to Israeli sovereignty" (al-Mayadeen, August 25, 2023).

► Hamas also mobilized its official and unofficial media outlets to conduct a systematic campaign designed to warn of the "dangers of normalization" and generate opposition to the move in both Saudi and broader Arab public opinion. As part of the campaign, whose intensity increased during 2023, articles, analyses, commentaries and opinion polls supporting Hamas' position were systematically published. According to that position, normalization would have severe consequences for the Palestinian cause and Saudi Arabia itself would not benefit as it believed. The campaign also incorporated articles and reports

⁶ Eliminated in January 2024.

from the Israeli media featuring Israeli skepticism and reservations expressed by Israeli figures.



Right: An interview with Dr. Hassan Nafaa, a professor of political science, who warned that normalization was far more dangerous than the peace agreement with Egypt, to the point of destroying the Palestinian cause and generating regional chaos (*al-Risalah*, September 7, 2023). Center: An article headlined, "Saudi-Israeli Normalization – The Great Illusion" (Quds Network, September 29, 2023). Left: Poll results: 38% of Saudis refused to recognize Israel and 57% of Saudis refused to answer questions on the subject. Eighty-four percent of respondents in the Arab world opposed their countries' recognition of Israel, and the same percentage viewed normalization as a threat to stability and security (*al-Risalah* website, January 9, 2023)

► After the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, Hamas did not conceal the fact that preventing normalization had been one of the objectives of the atrocities, and that was reflected in publications and special supplements dedicated to glorification:

- ◆ On the first anniversary of what Hamas called Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the Shehab News Agency, one of Hamas' unofficial media outlets,⁷ published an "investigative article" stating that October 7 had "shattered Israel's image and derailed the normalization train" (Shehab News Agency, October 8, 2024).
- ◆ In a comprehensive review in Arabic and English published by Hamas entitled, "Our Narrative," marking two years since Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the movement justified the attack. Under the heading "Derailing the Normalization Track," it stated, "The Flood exposed the truth about the Zionist entity to the countries and peoples of the region as a real and immediate danger, not as a partner for peace and coexistence, but

⁷ See the February 2026 Amit Institute report, [Hamas Media as Reflected in Documents Brought Back from the Gaza Strip](#)

as one that reveals what the occupation seeks: subjugating the region and driving it to submit to Zionist hegemony" (*al-Risalah*, December 27, 2025).



Right: "A year after it occurred... Report: The great October 7 breakthrough shattered Israel's image and derailed the normalization train" (Shehab, October 8, 2024). Left: "Derailed the Normalization Track" from the document "Our Narrative" marking two years since operation al-Aqsa Flood (*al-Risalah*, December 27, 2025)

Situation Assessment and the Decision to Fight Normalization

► Hamas documents brought back by the IDF from the Gaza Strip during the Gaza Strip War showed that the Hamas leadership closely and continuously monitored efforts to promote normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia from their inception, particularly in light of the media attention they received beginning in 2022, and devoted a prominent place to the issue in its meetings and various movement forums. The documents indicate that Hamas viewed the entire process as a real danger and a strategic threat which contradicted its worldview, and took action to sabotage it.

► In July 2022, Yahya al-Sinwar,⁸ head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip, sent a letter to Isma'il Haniyeh ahead of a meeting scheduled between Haniyeh and religious scholars in Syria aimed at repairing relations between Hamas and the Syrian regime following the crisis and the departure of the Hamas leadership from Syria during the uprising against the Assad regime. In addition to emphasizing the importance of relations with Syria for Hamas and the "resistance axis," al-Sinwar asked Haniyeh to use the meeting to raise the issue of normalization and the "rush" of a number of Arab and Islamic countries toward normalization. Al-Sinwar also presented a pragmatic approach regarding Hamas' efforts to form a camp opposed to normalization, based on his understanding that even countries

⁸ Eliminated on October 16, 2024.

considered friendly toward Hamas had already been infected by the normalization process, and said gathering the opposition camp from such "fragments" was preferable to surrender and capitulation.

4. There is no alternative but to focus the discussion on the state of collapse of a number of regional countries, Arab and Islamic, and on their rush toward normalization with the occupation. Our role is to strengthen those who continue to boycott the occupation, develop the position of those who are hesitant and try to push those who have normalized (relations) to cease normalization.

5. Great emphasis should be placed on the Arab-Israeli NATO alliance, the objectives of Biden's tour and its impact on the future of Palestine, Jerusalem and al-Aqsa; and on our role in shaping and consolidating the alliance of confrontation and resistance, even if only from fragments of the region, from quarters, fifths and even tenths. If we wish to establish an alliance only from those who are perfect, then no one is perfect, not even the countries most friendly toward us. They either normalize relations openly or under the table. So shall we surrender?

4. لابد من التركيز في الحديث على حالة الانهيار التي تعيشها دول المنطقة عربية وإسلامية وهرولتها للتطبيع مع الاحتلال. ونحن دورنا أن نعزز دور من يستمر في مقاطعة الاحتلال. وأن نطور موقف المتردد، وأن نحاول دفع من طبع لوقف التطبيع.

5. الكثير من التركيز على حلف الناتو العربي الإسرائيلي، وأهداف جولة بايدن، وأثر ذلك على مستقبل فلسطين والقدس والاقصى. ودورنا في تشكيل وبلورة حلف المواجهة والمقاومة ولو من شظايا المنطقة. من الأرباع والأخماس وحتى من الأعشار وإذا أردنا أن نشكل حلقاً فقط من المكتملين فليس هناك مكتمل، وحتى الدول الأكثر صداقة لنا إما مطبوعة علناً أو من تحت الطاولة،. فهل نسلم.

Document 1: Letter from al-Sinwar to Haniyeh, July 1, 2022

► As early as the first half of 2022, Hamas decided to allocate resources to combat normalization. Meeting no. 6 of Hamas' Executive Committee, held on February 27 and 28, 2022, decided to establish an office that would lead the struggle against normalization.⁹ At meeting no. 8 of the Executive Committee, held on May 23 and 24, 2022, a follow-up decision was adopted under the heading "The Struggle Against Normalization Portfolio" to establish a dedicated governmental office to manage the strategy of the struggle against normalization. The importance Hamas attached to the struggle against normalization can

⁹ We do not have the minutes of the meeting.

also be seen in the decision to appoint Marwan Issa,¹⁰ deputy commander of Hamas' military wing, to head the office.

3. Approval of the establishment of a central portfolio to combat normalization, to be entrusted to a member of the Executive Committee.
4. The office will oversee the formulation of the vision, the philosophy of the struggle, the general policy and the work plan, and will implement them while monitoring progress through coordination and cooperation with all the components and methods the movement operates in this framework.
5. This portfolio will be entrusted to Brother Abu al-Baraa' [Marwan Issa], and steps will be taken to remove the obstacles hindering his activity.

1. الموافقة على إنشاء ملف مركزي لمقاومة التطبيع يسند إلى أحد أعضاء (ل.ت).
 2. يشرف هذا المكتب على وضع الرؤية وفلسفة المواجهة والسياسات العامة و خطة العمل، ويجري تنفيذها ومتابعتها من خلال التنسيق والتعاون مع كل المكونات والأدوات التي تعمل بها الحركة في هذا الإطار.
 3. إسناد هذا الملف إلى الأخ/ أبو البراء مع العمل على تذليل العقبات لانطلاق هذا العمل.

Document 2: Establishing a dedicated office to combat normalization, from the minutes of Hamas Executive Committee meeting, May 23 and 24, 2022

Identification of a Decline in the Chances of Successful Normalization

► As part of its ongoing monitoring of developments regarding normalization, Hamas' political department frequently assessed the situation, providing updates and recommendations regarding ways to disrupt, delay and even sabotage the process, which Hamas regarded as a real threat to its aspirations and worldview. In June 2023, the political department produced an assessment entitled "A Decline in the Chances of Normalization Between the Entity and Saudi Arabia in the Foreseeable Future," with the subtitle, "Saudi Arabia's Demands from the American Administration in Exchange for Normalization Are an Impossible Price." According to the assessment, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu erred in his

¹⁰ Eliminated in March 2024.

evaluations, displayed excessive optimism, failed to understand the motives and ambitions of the Saudi crown prince and did not take into account changes in the new world order that emerged following the Russia-Ukraine war.

It appears that Prime Minister of the occupation Netanyahu was hasty when he publicized, through direct and indirect means, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia's imminent accession to the "normalization club" on the eve of the establishment of his extremist government at the beginning of the current year.

يبدو أن رئيس وزراء الاحتلال نتياهو كان متسرعاً عندما أشاع بطرق مباشرة وغير مباشرة، عن قرب ضم المملكة السعودية إلى "نادي التطبيع"، عشية تشكيل حكومته المتطرفة بداية العام الحالي.

It appears that Netanyahu's assessment and aspirations to bring the kingdom into the normalization agreements were based on his evaluation of the personality of Saudi Arabia's new ruler, Mohammed bin Salman, his strong desire to transform the kingdom into a liberal secular one and his ambitions to turn Saudi Arabia into a global economic, financial and tourist center, a complete contrast to its conservative Saudi Wahhabi-Salafi heritage.

يبدو أن تقدير نتياهو وطموحاته لضم المملكة إلى اتفاقيات التطبيع، استندت إلى تقييماته بشأن شخصية الملك الجديد للسعودية محمد بن سلمان، ورغبته الجامحة في تغيير طابع المملكة إلى الوجه العلماني الليبرالي، وتطلعاته لتحويل السعودية إلى مركز اقتصادي ومالي وسياحي إقليمي ودولي، بعيداً عن إرث السعودية الوهابي السلفي المحافظ.

Assessment: At the beginning of his current term the prime minister of the entity was eager to bring the kingdom into the Abraham Accords and regarded it as one of the pillars of his foreign policy. However, it appears that Netanyahu was overly optimistic regarding the ease with which the club of normalizing states would expand and failed to understand the nature of the international changes following the war in Ukraine and the emergence of a new multipolar international system.

التقدير: رئيس وزراء الكيان، كان حريص جداً في بداية ولايته الحالية على ضم المملكة إلى الاتفاقيات "الإبراهيمية"، وأعدّها أحد أعمدة سياسته الخارجية، ولكن يبدو أن نتنهاهو أفرط في التفاؤل بشأن سلاسة توسيع نادي المطبوعين، ولم يدرك طبيعة التغيرات الدولية بعد الحرب في أوكرانيا، وبداية بروز نظام دولي جديد متعدد الفاعلين.

Document 3: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, June 6, 2023

► Regarding Saudi Arabia's demands in exchange for normalization, the assessment stated that the demands were impossible, from the perspectives of both Israel and the United States. Chief among them were American assistance in establishing a civilian nuclear program in Saudi Arabia, the removal of the American veto on the sale of advanced weapons which could have a negative impact on Israel's military superiority and a strategic defense alliance between the United States and Saudi Arabia similar to NATO, including security guarantees. Additional obstacles to normalization cited in the assessment included the dramatic renewal of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran under Chinese sponsorship. It was also noted that the United States and Israel would not be able to accept a decrease in Israel's regional military superiority.

Of course, the United States and the entity's state cannot agree to the kingdom's obtaining a nuclear program for peaceful purposes, even if the objective is to deter Iran. Nor can they agree to its acquiring advanced American weaponry such as the F-35 stealth aircraft and highly advanced air defense systems to protect the kingdom from Iran and its proxies.

طبعاً لا يمكن للولايات المتحدة ولا دولة الكيان، القبول بحصول المملكة على برنامج نووي سلمي حتى وإن كان الهدف ردع إيران، ولا الحصول على أسلحة نوعية من الولايات المتحدة مثل طائرة أف 35 الشبحية، وأنظمة دفاع جوي متقدمة جداً، لحماية المملكة من إيران وأذرعها.

Document 3: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, June 6, 2023

► Another reason cited for the declining prospects of normalization was that despite Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's aspirations to transform Saudi Arabia into a liberal economic and social center, he was viewed as a pragmatic figure who did not feel compelled to make concessions to the United States at that stage because he believed that American influence in the region was in decline and would therefore prioritize Saudi interests above everything else.

Avoiding Tension with Saudi Arabia

► Another assessment by Hamas' political and foreign relations department from September 2023 was that normalization was a process which would occur in any event, whether gradually in several stages or comprehensively and rapidly. The document brought back from the Gaza Strip by the IDF also showed that Hamas monitored the Palestinian Authority's positions and actions with concern and considered it would be a partner in the process because it wanted to derive benefits from it, especially the renewal of negotiations with Israel for the establishment of a Palestinian state and a series of additional concessions that Saudi Arabia was expected to demand from Israel with American pressure.

► As support for its assessments regarding Saudi Arabia's regional motives in promoting normalization, Hamas added a media report stating that the concessions Saudi Arabia was expected to demand from Israel were intended to deflect Turkish and Iran criticism that Saudi Arabia was undermining Palestinian efforts to establish an independent state.

The Saudi conditions regarding the Palestinian issue:

In addition to Saudi Arabia's own conditions and demands, whether related to security, technology or energy, one of the obstacles to a normalization deal, according to an August 9 *Wall Street Journal* report, was the concessions the entity would have grant the Palestinians in exchange for establishing open diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. American and Saudi officials say Israel will have to present a significant proposal, "without defining its contours," which would strengthen efforts aimed at establishing an independent Palestinian state.

According to the report, Saudi Arabia seeks to obtain a genuine concession from Israel to deflect criticism from its rivals in Iran and Turkey, which are waiting to accuse the kingdom of trampling the Palestinians' aspirations for an independent state.

الشروط السعودية المتعلقة بالقضية الفلسطينية:

بالإضافة لشروط ومطالب سعودية خاصة بها سواء أمنية أو تكنولوجية أو مرتبطة بالطاقة، فإن إحدى العقبات التي تواجه صفقة التطبيع وفق ما أوردته صحيفة الـوول ستريت جورنال في 09 أغسطس هي التنازلات التي يتعين على الكيان تقديمها للفلسطينيين مقابل إقامة علاقات دبلوماسية مفتوحة مع السعودية، حيث يقول المسؤولون الأمريكيون والسعوديون إنه سيتعين على إسرائيل تقديم عرض مهم "دون تحديد ملامحه" يعزز الجهود الرامية إلى إنشاء دولة فلسطينية مستقلة.

Document 4: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, September 2023

► Hamas regarded Saudi Arabia's declared support for the Palestinian cause as a step intended to weaken its resolve and neutralize its struggle against normalization. Moreover, the document showed that Hamas was also preparing for the possibility that Saudi Arabia would seek to engage with it to prepare the ground for the move and soften its opposition. Hamas therefore concluded that it needed a coherent, orderly plan against normalization. At the same time, Hamas was required to maneuver between its firm public opposition to normalization and its desire to avoid damaging its relations with Saudi Arabia, which had regional influence and was the leader of the Sunni world. Accordingly, the recommendations emphasized the need for a separation between presenting the movement's position on normalization and exercising caution to avoid damaging relations with Saudi Arabia or using terminology that could offend Saudi Arabia and consequently cause Hamas political damage.

- The movement's position opposing normalization should be upheld in a principled, absolute manner, while warning of its dangers.
- If a normalization agreement is implemented, a position clearly rejecting the move and emphasizing the movement's stance should be presented, but without creating tension and without using terms such as treason.

الحفاظ على موقف الحركة الراض التطيع بشكل مبدئي ومطلق ويحذر من مخاطره.
 • تقديم موقف واضح ولكن بعيدا عن التشنج ولغة التخوين في حال إتمام صفقة التطيع، يرفض الخطوة ويؤكد على موقف الحركة.

Document 4: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, September 2023

The Need for Escalation in Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem

► Based on the lessons of the second intifada, in Hamas assessment escalation in Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem could significantly contribute to the movement's efforts to delay, obstruct and disrupt the normalization process. Therefore, one of the recommendations in the document was to encourage escalation in those areas.

Action should be taken to intensify the escalation on the ground, in Judea and Samaria and in Jerusalem, to disrupt the normalization process of the Saudi kingdom, given that the situation on the ground is one of the most important tools for restraining normalization, since the second intifada was the central factor that led to the collapse of the normalization project presented by the Arab Peace Initiative in 2002.

• العمل على تعزيز التصعيد الميداني في الضفة والقدس لإعاقة مسار تطبيع المملكة السعودية، باعتبار أن الوضع الميداني هو أكثر الأدوات تأثيراً لكبح جماح التطبيع، سيما وأن الانتفاضة الثانية كانت المنجر الأساسي لمشروع التطبيع الذي طرح بمقتضى مبادرة السلام العربية في 2002.

Document 4: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, September 2023

► Regarding the struggle against normalization in the political arena, the recommendation was to form an "opposition front" based on the "resistance axis" and the countries expected to be negatively impacted by the move.

The contradictions within the regional map of interests should be exploited to form a front opposing normalization, both from within the resistance axis and from among the states that may be harmed by the process, such as Egypt, Algeria and Jordan.

• استغلال تناقضات خارطة المصالح في المنطقة لتحشيد جبهة رافضة لمسار التطبيع سواء على صعيد محور المقاومة أو على صعيد الدول المتضررة من هذا المسار كمصر والجزائر والأردن.

Document 4: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, September 2023

► Hamas considered the media arena important for the struggle against normalization. It therefore recommended a media campaign directed at Saudi audiences and the broader Arab world which would focus on the dangers of normalization and attempt to drive a wedge between Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Arab states by blackening Israel's image and discrediting it. Furthermore, it recommended to examine the use of intelligence means and media outlets to smear Israel's image in Arab countries supporting normalization through incitement propaganda and encouraging boycotts of cooperation with Israel.

• Regarding the media, a campaign should be launched targeting the Saudi and Arab arenas highlighting the dangers of normalization, shedding light on the entity's (Israel's) many racist positions and statements which attack Saudi Arabia and the Arabs in general, and presenting the entity's cruelty and crimes against all Arabs, not only against the Palestinians, through diverse media and cultural initiatives.

في القضاء الإعلامي توجيه حملة إعلامية تجاه الوسط السعودي والعربي يبرز مخاطر التطبيع ويسلط الضوء على عديد المواقف والتصريحات العنصرية الصادرة عن الكيان والتي تهاجم السعودية والعرب عموماً، وتظهر وحشية الكيان وجرائمه بحق العرب جميعاً وليس الفلسطينيين فقط، ويأدوات اعلامية وثقافية متعددة.

Document 4: Situation assessment by Hamas' political department, September 2023

Concentrating on Regional and Popular Organizations

► The importance the Hamas leadership attached to the struggle against normalization can be seen in its decision to appoint an individual responsible for advancing the issue vis-à-vis regional and popular organizations. In a document issued by the Hamas Office for Arab and Islamic Relations on October 3, 2022, the job requirements for the position of coordinator of relations with popular organizations, who would be subordinate to the head of the regional organizations section, were outlined. Paragraphs 13 and 16 defined responsibilities related to the struggle against normalization. Paragraph 13 stated that whoever held the position would be required to take an active role in promoting the activities opposing normalization and boycotts related to regional and popular organizations. Paragraph 16 stated that the individual would also be required to promote and market Hamas campaigns dealing with the struggle against normalization to regional and popular organizations.

13- المساهمة بدور فاعل في تنشيط دور وعمل الأطر العاملة في مجال مناهضة التطبيع والمقاطعة التابعة أو ذات الصلة بالمنظمات.
 14- العمل على حل الإشكالات التي تحصل في العلاقة بين المنظمات الإقليمية الشعبية، بالتشاور مع رئيس القسم.
 15- تقديم الاقتراح الخاص بالإجراء المناسب في ضوء الرصد لمواقف وأعمال المنظمات الإقليمية الشعبية إلى رئيس القسم.
 16- تسويق برامج الحركة الخاصة بمواجهة التطبيع والمقاطعة لدى المنظمات الإقليمية الشعبية.
 17- اعداد التقارير الدورية والخاصة عن أعماله، وتقديمه إلى رئيس القسم.

Document 5: Paragraphs 13-16 of the job requirements for the position of Coordinator of Relations with Popular Organizations in Hamas, October 3, 2022

Normalization as Reflected in Hamas-Iran Relations

Iranian Support for Hamas after Operation Guardian of the Walls

► Following Operation Guardian of the Walls (what Hamas calls the Sword of Jerusalem campaign) in May 2021, letters of congratulations and encouragement were sent to the Hamas leadership by Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei,¹¹ and by the commander of the Palestine

¹¹ Eliminated on February 28, 2026.

Corps in the Iranian Qods Force, Muhammad Saeed Izadi (Hajj Ramadan).¹² Alongside encouragement and praise for Hamas and the other terrorist organizations for the "brilliant victory and tremendous achievements," in his letters to Haniyeh and to the head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Yahya al-Sinwar, Izadi emphasized that the achievements were also very important in sending a message to the normalization camp.

The immense sacrifices of the Palestinian people, and what those sacrifices produced in the form of the rallying of the nation's people around the Palestinian resistance in its defense of Jerusalem and the holy sites, isolated all those defeatists allied with the Zionist enemy and foiled their normalization project, after the resistance's capability, which achieved the victory, exposed their disgrace.

إن عظيم تضحيات الشعب الفلسطيني وما وأدته تلك التضحيات من التفاف أبناء الأمة حول المقاومة الفلسطينية في دفاعها عن القدس والمقدسات، عزل كل أولئك المتخاذلين المتحالفين مع العدو الصهيوني وأجهض مشروعهم التطبيعي، بعد أن فضحتهم قدرة المقاومة التي صنعت النصر.

Document 6: Letter from Izadi to Haniyeh, May 21, 2021

You in Gaza, which has endured the longest siege known to history, achieved this tremendous victory despite all the challenges and hardships you face. Together with the entire world, we saw the steadfast spirit of the Gazans, who emerged chanting Allahu Akbar, rejoicing in the victory while accepting their fate despite the destruction and brutal massacres suffered by the Strip. That attests to the depth of their awareness and wisdom, and exposes all those defeatist traitors in the face of the enemy, who rush to form alliances with it under the pretext that they are unable to bear the consequences of confronting it.

لقد استطعتم وأنتم في غزة التي تعاني من أطول حصار عرفه التاريخ، أن تحققوا هذا الانتصار العظيم، رغم كل التحديات والصعاب التي تواجهكم، وقد شهدنا مع كل العالم الروح العالية لأهل قطاع غزة الذين خرجوا مهللين مكبرين فرحين بالنصر، وقد احتسبوا كل ما تعرض له القطاع من دمار ومجازر وحشية عند الله عز وجل. وهذا يدل على عمق الوعي والبصيرة، ويفضح كل أولئك الخونة المتخاذلين أمام العدو الذين يسارعون لموالاته بحجة أنهم غير قادرين على تحمل تبعات مواجهته.

Document 6: Letter from Izadi to al-Sinwar, May 21, 2021

¹² Eliminated on June 21, 2025. See the January 2025 Amit Institute report, [Activities of Saeed Izadi, Head of the Qods Forces' "Palestine Branch," Reflected in Captured Documents](#)

Reassurance for Hamas following the Rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia

► Between June 19 and 23, 2023, a high-level Hamas delegation visited Tehran. The delegation included Isma'il Haniyeh, Saleh al-Arouri and Khalil al-Hayya, al-Sinwar's deputy. On the Iranian side, participants included Khamenei, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi,¹³ the Supreme Leader's adviser for international affairs Ali Akbar Velayati, Qods Force commander Esmail Qa'ani and "Palestine" Branch chief Izadi. According to a Hamas document brought back from the Gaza Strip by the IDF, containing the protocol of the visit, senior Hamas figures raised the issue of normalization and their deep concern over its dangers, particularly because of the media attention given to the warming of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.¹⁴ The Iranians reassured the Hamas leadership and made firm declarations against normalization, stating normalization efforts were futile. Khamenei sought to allay Hamas' concerns, justifying his position by implying that the Saudis were a weak reed regarding the Palestinian issue and their actions were products of narrow political considerations, unlike Iran, which consistently acted in support of Palestinian interests.

What you mentioned regarding regional stability is also a good thing. Our government decided to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia, but that is not something that can be relied upon. The Palestinian issue needs people who possess faith and conviction, not political maneuvers.

ما أشرت إليه من الاستقرار على مستوى المنطقة هذا شيء طيب أيضاً، وقررت حكومتنا أن تطيع العلاقات مع السعودية، ولكن هذا الأمر لا يمكن الرهان عليه، فالقضية الفلسطينية تحتاج إلى من لديه اعتقاد وإلى إيمان وليس إلى مناورات سياسية.

Document 7: Khamenei's remarks from the protocol of the Hamas delegation's visit to Iran, June 19-23, 2023

► Iranian President Raisi stated during the meeting that normalization efforts were futile because "the Zionists cannot be trusted," and therefore the process was unlikely to influence the peoples of the region or provide security for Israel.

¹³ Killed on May 19, 2024.

¹⁴ In March 2023, Iran and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement in Beijing, mediated by China, to renew diplomatic relations that had been severed in 2016. The widely publicized agreement, which marked a rapprochement between the two principal rivals in the Middle East, included the reopening of embassies and was presented as a step toward reducing regional tensions and promoting economic stability.

We in Iran believe that the Zionists cannot be trusted and that it is impossible to put confidence in them. The normalization efforts with the entity, which the United States is promoting, will not produce any results among the peoples of the region. Our message to all the partners in normalization is that it is a stab in the back of Palestine and a betrayal of it. In addition, it will not achieve security for Israel.

نحن في إيران نؤمن أن الصهاينة لا أيمان لهم، وأنه لا يمكن الوثوق بهم، وأن ما تقوم به أمريكا من محاولات تطبيعها للكيان في المنطقة لن يؤدي إلى أي نتائج أمام شعوب المنطقة. ورسالتنا إلى كل المطبوعين أن هذا المسار هو طعنة في ظهر فلسطين وخيانة لها، فضلاً عن أنه لن يؤدي إلى أمن الكيان أبداً.

Document 7: Raisi's remarks from the protocol of the Hamas delegation's visit to Iran, June 19-23, 2023

► Meeting with senior Hamas figures Iranian Majlis (parliament) speaker Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf said it was not enough merely to oppose the process, but a heavy price should be exacted from the "traitors" belonging to the normalization camp.

From a regional perspective, attention must be devoted to the danger of normalization, and there is no alternative but to formulate plans that will exact a heavy price from those traitors who take part in normalization.

على صعيد المنطقة، لا بد من الاهتمام بخطر التطبيع، ولابد من وضع برامج لتحميل أولئك المطبوعين ضريبة عالية لخيانتهم.

Document 7: Qalibaf's remarks from the protocol of the Hamas delegation's visit to Iran, June 19-23, 2023

Al-Sinwar's Insights of 2023

Normalization with Saudi Arabia Is More Dangerous than Normalization with Any Other Country

► The documents the IDF brought back from the Gaza Strip indicate that as 2023 progressed, the Hamas leadership increasingly came to understand that its efforts to halt the normalization process through the various channels described above were not producing the desired results, and that the "normalization train" was speeding toward its destination under determined and consistent American encouragement, already including practical steps such as visits by Israeli ministers to Saudi Arabia. According to a document dated October 5, 2023, containing the minutes of the 19th meeting of Hamas' Executive Committee held on September 26 and 27, 2023, a political assessment entitled "Confronting the Saudi-Israeli Normalization Process" was extensively discussed. According to the minutes, a series

of decisions was passed, including approval of the document, with several comments, preparation of a practical work plan to combat normalization and authorizing the Executive Committee to oversee its implementation. Guiding principles were defined, including clearly expressed opposition to the process, expansion of the front opposing normalization and, as recommended, a focus on Jerusalem and escalation of the "resistance" in Judea and Samaria.

► The Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, Yahya al-Sinwar, presented a position paper entitled, "Conduct Regarding the Saudi-Israeli Normalization Track." He explained why Saudi Arabia's leading the process made it especially dangerous and serious, and included criticism of the conduct of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, accusing him of promoting normalization for personal reasons related to enhancing his regional image.

- Normalization is entirely evil, and there is no difference between one country and another when it comes to normalization. However, Saudi Arabia holds a special status at the Arab and Islamic levels and has considerable influence, making this a regrettable, troubling, reprehensible and puzzling step. The following differences can be identified between Saudi normalization and that of any other country:
 1. It paves the way and encourages other countries to move forward along the path.
 2. The Palestinian issue is part of the Saudi-American negotiations, and the Palestinian question will be affected by the outcome of any agreements which are reached. That will have implications for the Palestinian issue in both its political and practical aspects.
 3. The agreement is not limited to a bilateral meeting but extends beyond it into a broader, new regional order involving political and security alliances, with the Zionist entity at their heart.

- Bin Salman aspires to establish his image as the leader of the region at the expense of all other countries, including Egypt. Leadership of the region must pass through the Israeli gateway in coordination with the Americans. His growing ambitions and political recklessness have implications for our issue and for the region, and herein lies the danger of this step.

• التطبيع شر كله. ولا فرق بين دولة وأخرى في التطبيع. ولكن السعودية تحتل مكانة على المستوى العربي والإسلامي ولها تأثير كبير. ومؤسف ومزعج ومستهجن أن تذهب إلى هذا الاتجاه. ويمكن رصد الفوارق التالية بين تطبيع السعودية مقارنة بأي دولة أخرى:

1. يمهّد الطريق ويشجع دولاً أخرى على المضي قدماً في هذا المسار.
2. أن القضية الفلسطينية جزء من المفاوضات السعودية الأمريكية. والموضوع الفلسطيني يتأثر بمخرجات أي اتفاقات يحصل. وله تداعيات على القضية الفلسطينية في بعدها السياسي والميداني.
3. لا يقتصر الاتفاق على اللقاء الثنائي. بل يتعداه إلى نطاق أوسع يشمل نظام إقليمي جديد يتعلق بتحالفات سياسية وأمنية، والكيان الصهيوني سيكون في قلب هذه التحالفات.

• يسعى ابن سلمان إلى تكريس صورته كزعيم للمنطقة على حساب كل الدول بما فيها مصر، وزعامة المنطقة لا بد أن تمر عبر البوابة الإسرائيلية بالتفاهم مع الأمريكان. وطموح العظمة والجنون السياسي لها تداعيات على قضيتنا وعلى المنطقة، وهذا مكمّن خطورة هذه الخطوة.

Document 8: Minutes of the Hamas Executive Committee meeting (September 26 and 27, 2023), October 5, 2023

► Al-Sinwar's review shows that he viewed the realization of normalization as a genuinely fatal blow which would eliminate the Palestinian cause, and he stressed that Hamas would not surrender to normalization or accept it as having been divinely ordained.

- While we sense the danger of normalization, we do not surrender to it as having been divinely ordained and will end the Palestinian issue. It is the issue of a people, a nation and holy places that have survived many conspiracies. Egyptian or Saudi normalization will not end the cause of the Palestinian people.

• في الوقت الذي نستشعر فيه خطورة هذا التطبيع، لكن لا نستسلم له باعتباره قدرا سينهي القضية الفلسطينية، إنها قضية شعب وأمة ومقدسات، تجاوزت الكثير من المؤامرات، فلا التطبيع المصري أو السعودي سينهي قضية الشعب الفلسطيني.

Document 8: Minutes of the Hamas Executive Committee meeting (September 26 and 27, 2023), October 5, 2023

Striking the "Zionist enemy" to Send a Message to the Normalization Partners

► Al-Sinwar also said Hamas could play an important role in disrupting and halting normalization by "inflicting a blow on the Zionist enemy and undermining its sense of security." In al-Sinwar's view, that would also tell the countries of the normalization camp that Israel was not a safe place. He reached this conclusion based on lessons from the past and the role Hamas played in derailing the Oslo Accords and the Dayton Agreements.¹⁵

- Hamas is not marginal; through its resistance and through the arms of our Palestinian people, it can disrupt the plans and halt the spread of the conspiracies against the Palestinian cause. Just as we played a role in subverting Oslo and Dayton, and in light of the steadfastness of the resistance in Gaza throughout the wars waged by the movement against the Zionist enemy, and the movement's defense of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque, we will have a role in striking this Zionist enemy, shaking its foundations, undermining its security and sending a message to the partners in normalization that the Israeli occupation is not an oasis of security and stability. That is a very important element in confronting the issue, in addition to strengthening the roadmap for action with our allies, the components of the nation and its elites.

¹⁵ A strategic initiative led by the United States to reorganize, train and upgrade the Palestinian Authority's security apparatuses. The arrangements were named after American General Keith Dayton, who was appointed in 2005 as the U.S. security coordinator for the Palestinian Authority.

- We will confront this phase as duty requires, despite the imbalance in the balance of power. We may not succeed in stopping the process, but we will disrupt it and deprive it of legitimacy.

• حماس ليست طرفاً مهيض الجناح بمقاومتها وسواعد شعبنا الفلسطيني، ويمكن أن تترك حسابات البيدر وتعيق تمدد المشاريع التأميرية على القضية الفلسطينية، وكما كان لنا دور في إجهاض أوصلو، ودايتون، وثبات المقاومة في غزة عبر الحروب التي خاضتها الحركة مع العدو الصهيوني، ودفاع الحركة عن القدس والمسجد الأقصى، سيكون لنا دور في ضرب هذا العدو الصهيوني، وهز أركانه وإفقاده الأمن، وإعطاء رسالة للمطبعين أن الاحتلال الإسرائيلي ليس واحة أمن واستقرار، وهذا أمر مهم جداً في مواجهة هذه المسألة، بالإضافة إلى تعزيز خارطة التحرك مع الحلفاء ومكونات ونخب الأمة.

• سنتعامل مع هذه المحطة بما يجب علينا رغم اختلاف موازين القوى، وقد لا نفلح في وقف المسار، ولكن نعيقه وترفع عنه الشرعية، والأيام دول كما قال

Document 8: Minutes of the Hamas Executive Committee meeting (September 26-27, 2023), October 5, 2023

No Political Suicide

► At the Executive Committee meeting, the Hamas leadership passed a series of practical decisions for combating normalization, including shaping perception to construct a broad front opposing the process at the local, regional and international levels, along with popular initiatives. At the same time, Hamas was careful to conduct the struggle in the political arena in an extremely cautious and controlled manner.

1. The position must be clear, strong, unwavering and unequivocal.
2. Strength, clarity and political and media boldness do not mean embarking on a course of political suicide. Political confrontations should not be begun with the entire Arab and Islamic environment, since many states have moved in this direction (normalization).

3. The front opposing Saudi-Israeli normalization should be expanded at both the popular and official levels, on the Palestinian, regional and international planes; all parts of the nation should be mobilized, and the scope of popular and elite-secular opposition should be broadened to reduce the dangers of normalization and halt its spread.

1. أن يكون الموقف واضحاً وقويًا غير متردد وغير قابل للتأويل.
 2. القوة والوضوح والجرأة السياسية والإعلامية لا تعني الدخول في عملية انتحارية سياسية. ودون فتح معارك سياسية مع كل المحيط العربي والإسلامي. لأن العديد من الدول سارت بهذا الاتجاه.
 3. توسيع جبهة الرافضين للتطبيع السعودي الإسرائيلي شعبياً ورسمياً على المستوى الفلسطيني والإقليمي والدولي. وتحريك كل مكونات الأمة، وتوسيع أكبر نطاق شعبي نخيوي علماني. للحد من أخطار التطبيع ومحاصرة تمدده.

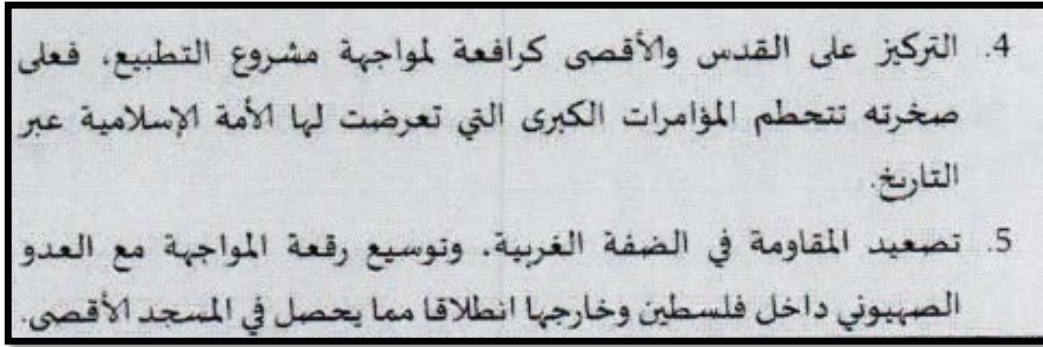
Document 8: Minutes of the Hamas Executive Committee meeting (September 26-27, 2023), October 5, 2023

Al-Aqsa and Jerusalem, the Accelerant for the Struggle

► The minutes of the meeting showed that al-Sinwar believed that to increase the chances of success in the struggle against normalization and mobilize as broad an opposition front as possible, normalization should be portrayed as a threat to the sacred values at the heart of the Muslim consensus and used as the accelerant for escalating terrorism in Judea and Samaria, inside Israel and beyond:

4. Focus on Jerusalem and al-Aqsa to leverage the struggle against the normalization project. It is against that rock that the greatest conspiracies faced by the Islamic nation throughout history have been shattered.

5. Escalate the resistance in the West Bank and expand the arena of confrontation with the Zionist enemy inside and outside Palestine, based on what is taking place at al-Aqsa Mosque.



Document 8: Minutes of the Hamas Executive Committee meeting (September 26-27, 2023), October 5, 2023

► Al-Sinwar's position and his use of the "threat to al-Aqsa" to leverage escalation and ignite the situation was also clearly reflected in an impassioned speech he delivered after Operation Guardian of the Walls. He stressed that al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem were a red line and firing rockets at Jerusalem had merely been a rehearsal and a small exercise illustrating what could happen if Israel again attempted to damage al-Aqsa Mosque. He threatened that the next time Israel tried to harm al-Aqsa, the "resistance" would attack Israel with its full force in a combined assault involving the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and the Arabs of the "occupied territory" [the Arabs of Israel].



Al-Sinwar's speech after Operation Guardian of the Walls (Al Jazeera, May 26, 2021)

The Need for an Extraordinary Action to Create a Strategic Turning Point

► At the Hamas political bureau meeting in the Gaza Strip on October 2, 2023, the last meeting before the October 7 terrorist attack and massacre, al-Sinwar again related to normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia. He claimed it would lead to "regional deterioration" as additional countries followed Saudi Arabia and created a complex reality for the "resistance project." He ruled that, given the situation and the progress of normalization, there was no alternative but to carry out what he described as an

"extraordinary action" by Hamas and its "resistance axis" partners. However, although al-Sinwar knew that the attack was expected to begin within a matter of days, he did not refer to it directly, evidence of the compartmentalization that existed even within Hamas' top leadership.

• **The Saudi-Zionist normalization:**

1. There is no doubt that the Saudi-Zionist normalization agreement is advancing significantly, especially in light of the practical steps being taken (visits by Zionist ministers to Saudi Arabia and the media discourse).
2. Normalization with Saudi Arabia will bring about a strategic change in the region and the world, open the door for most Arab and Islamic countries to move down the same path and increase the challenges facing the resistance project and the Jerusalem axis.
3. An extraordinary action is required by the movement and the forces of the resistance axis to create a major shift or a strategic turning point in the trajectories and balances of power in the region regarding the Palestinian issue and the confrontation with normalization and the region's collapse.

• **التطبيع السعودي الصهيوني:**

1. مما لا شك فيه أن اتفاق التطبيع السعودي الصهيوني يتقدم بصورة كبيرة، خاصة في ظل الإجراءات العملية (زيارات الوزراء الصهاينة للسعودية- الحديث الإعلامي).
2. التطبيع مع السعودية سيحدث تغييراً استراتيجياً في المنطقة والإقليم والعالم، وسيفتح الباب أمام غالبية الدول العربية والإسلامية للانحدار في ذات المسار، وسيزيد التعقيدات أمام مشروع المقاومة، ومحور القدس.
3. لابد من عمل غير عادي من قبل الحركة، وقوى محور المقاومة لإحداث حراك كبير أو تحول استراتيجي في المسارات والتوازنات في المنطقة وبما يخص القضية الفلسطينية ومواجهة التطبيع وإنهيار المنطقة.

Document 9: From the minutes of the Hamas political bureau meeting, October 2, 2023