



SERVICES OF HAMAS IN THE POLITICS OF PALESTINE

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Abstract

Hamas, a Palestinian Islamist movement, has been known for its militant resistance against Israeli occupation and its provision of social services to the Palestinian people. Despite being labeled as a terrorist organization by many Western countries, Hamas has gained widespread support among Palestinians for its unwavering commitment to the cause of a free Palestine. This research paper examines the political services of Hamas and their impact on the politics of Palestine. Through a critical analysis of Hamas's political and social services, this paper argues that the organization's success is not solely due to its reputation as a resistance movement, but also due to its ability to provide essential services to the Palestinian people. Hamas has established a vast network of social services, including schools, hospitals, and charities, which have helped to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. Furthermore, this article explores how Hamas's political services have been shaped by its struggle against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which has been seen as corrupt and ineffective by many Palestinians. Hamas's political platform has been built on a foundation of anti-corruption and good governance, which has resonated with many Palestinians who are disillusioned with the PLO's leadership. Overall, this research article provides a nuanced analysis of Hamas's political services and their impact on the politics of Palestine. By examining the organization's social and political services, this paper sheds light on the complex factors that have contributed to Hamas's success and its potential role in shaping the future of Palestine.

Key words: Hamas, PLO, intifada, Muslim Brotherhood, Gaza Strip, West Bank

Introduction

Hamas is a derivative of Muslim Brotherhood that does not only exasperates the Israeli authorities mostly through its surprise military attacks but also provoke the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) also known as Fatah. The abbreviation of Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (Islamic Resistance Movement), was founded as a consequence of the Intifada that was the starting point



of rejuvenation of the Islamic politics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the antagonism of the Israeli occupancy and in opposition to the gradually secularized PLO (Abu-Amr n.d.). Hamas has achieved success in the 2006 elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council because of its welfare work for the public in Palestine. The triumph of Hamas was ultimately denial of the Fatah, because of allegations of corruptions on it. The result of 2006 elections was unpleasant for both the Fatah and its western subsidizers, which led to the expulsion of Hamas from the West Bank from power. Meanwhile, Hamas coerced the armed forces of Fatah to retreat for Gaza after a week of combat (Guardia, 2013).

Hamas has two separate fractions, the political and the military. Though, there is no unambiguous idiosyncrasy between both branches. Furthermore, the supremacy of one section over the other constantly remains a query. It is known that the political wing has no say in the conflicts caused by the militant activities; however, the military wing is being operated under the guidance of Hamas political wing. The world is subdivided on the status of Hamas because of its military wing, for example, countries such as the United States, Canada, European countries and Japan, which accepts the political victory of Hamas but yet declared it as terrorist organization because of its militant nature. A number of countries, for instance, the Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Paraguay discerned the military force of Hamas, called as Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades as a guerrilla clique. There are also few countries which have opted for a neutral stance on the standing of Hamas. Meanwhile, the Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates do not regard Hamas as a radical association, but immensely criticizes the political activities of Hamas. In addition to that, the Arab countries have banished the entrance of Hamas leaders on their lands and Egypt has confined the leader of Hamas Ismail Haniyeh to the Gaza for a tenure of three years (Hammaduddin, Umer, and Dashti 2021).

There is no dispute among the Hamas leadership on the standing of denunciation of the existence of the Israeli state. However, the Hamas leader stationed in the West banks have formulated a peculiarity with this temperament, which they perceived against the moral assertions of the creation of Israel, particularly the establishment of Israel on the expense of indigenous Arab residence, and concede to the acknowledgement of the Israel in substitute of significant and consequential means. Contrary to the PLO leader, Arafat who made barter with Rabin for the mere acceptance of PLO as the archetype of the Palestinian people in exchange of the acceptance of the right of Israel existence in 1993 (Group 2012). In the sphere of politics, Hamas has promoted forums, political symposiums, and Islamic exposition, in particular at university campuses, which provides immense support for surging the influence of Hamas in the region. It releases announcements, brochures and pamphlets, and memorializes martyrs and the Islamic occasions as well. It also arranges protests and expostulations and other kinds of complaints. It is the corroboration of the achievement of Hamas and its impact, for summoning well rounded strikes. It is not transparent that any section of PLO, excluding the Fatah, could unaccompanied receive an analogous answer to its summons for their demonstrations (Osowski n.d.).



Hamas comply with religion in its political conduct owing to the fact of the Palestinian political panorama. Hamas withstand in opposition of Fatah in every day affairs, which manifests itself as a jingoistic, however, a secular political party. Hamas has acquired popularity, members and encouragement because it demonstrates itself as a Islamic national association from its initial days, which will accompany to the establishment of the Palestinian state, while opposing its opposition party, Fatah. In such a scenario it is mandatory for Hamas to continue its political behavior with the component of religion in it. Considering, Fatah, which is lingering to the secularism phenomenon, Hamas has to be persistent on its politics directed by religion to draw the attention of the right wing Palestinians. It demonstrates that Hamas is committed to the utilization of religion as well as politics to achieve the back-up of the Palestinians. Hence, it is the evidence that Hamas is one of the matured political organizations in its advanced stage (Ziad Abu-Amr, 1993.).

Also, Hamas had been a sanctuary to a lot of those Palestinians who dissented with the objectives and headship of the Oslo commencement, in the 1990s. A significant number of members of the Popular Committees of the PLO, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) also rejected the Oslo Accords. However, these parties and Hamas had not much to concede on except to persist on their opposition to the Oslo Accords. The foremost propel of Hamas was, societal, benevolent educational and political projects designed for Palestinians rather than the military acts inimical to the Israel.

Hamas has made a visualization of an Islamic state on adjourned including its common political standing of positive freedom against the negative freedom, meanwhile enduring and paradoxically suggesting assortment and representation of other parties, in case of the achievement of Palestinian sovereignty. The complicated nature of politics of Hamas cannot be contained to a single formula. Even though, its lobby has been determined on the ideological grounds to the doctrine of Islam, but it extracts its power from the explicit perspective of Palestinian jingoism. Practically, Hamas is not committed to the aspiration of creating a universal Islamic ummah. As per to a number of leaders of Hamas present in Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the instant and superseding objective of Hamas is the establishment of self-governing and autonomous state on the land of historical archetypal of Palestine, which is not deferential to Israeli authorities. Hence, the dread of the insertion of Hamas in PA decision making figures would establish a polity which is influenced by Islam (Zuhur, 2008).

Hamas has contributed in the organizations founded by the Oslo agenda in several sectors, including the PLC, in various PA Ministries as well as bestowed the eventual shift inclined to relaxation. Nevertheless the escalating tensy in a geographically cut up Parliament whose complete discussions were conveyed by VTC between Ramallah and Gaza and a government derived from an unsacred coalition that escorted towards a sequence of governance dilemma including the eruption of miniature but fierce civil war.

Hamas as a Political Party



After the demise of Arafat in November 2004, Hamas assumed that it is the time to step ahead as a political party and seek for proposals for legitimizing its political power. This resolution was determined through a number of components including the dissent of PA which followed by disorder and dishonest headship for years. The innervated position of Mahmoud Abbas as a president and successor of Arafat provided Hamas to an opportunity assert on taking the credit for the non involvement of Israel in Gaza and claimed for the share and management of that territory of Gaza. Subsequently, Hamas reputation was escalating as a potential provider of social services and militant forces. It must be accentuated that declaring Hamas as a political association is not an exaggeration. Even though, approximately 90 percent of the budget of Hamas is set off to the relief of community and its social performances. Hamas has presented itself as a political organization not merely on the basis of its mission but also through its behavior. Hamas has embraced a charter that is known as Hamas' Charter or The Covenant on August, 18, 1998. This Charter or Covenant is an inclusive manifesto which consists on thirty six segregated clauses. All of these clauses aggrandize the chief objectives of Hamas. A significant number of the clauses bound Hamas to two essential aspirations: one of which is to demolish repressive state of Jews, and the other is to pursue the commands of Allah Almighty by establishing an Islamic state from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. This is a transparent expression of Hamas profound alliance accompanied by Islam. There is no compromise on the disposition of the foremost religious and political objectives which is situated on the substitution of Israel by the Islamic state of Palestine. The article 11 interprets that the Palestinian Land is the sacred ownership which is focused for the future of generations of Muslims till the Day of the Judgment. Nobody can refuse it or any section of it and nobody can dispose it or any section of it. Regardless of the radicalism of the leaders of Hamas, the organization still holds up on the articles of Charter. It is adequate to bring up about the statement of the Culture Minister Atallah Abu Al-Subh which affirms that all the Jews nurture in their hearts the faith of Zion elders Protocols. Hence, the Hamas Charter is vividly utilized to the achievement of political purposes, even it denotes to the most illogical frame-up of an anti-Semitic theories of the world regarding Jewish hegemony (Robinson, 2023).

Concomitantly to the operation of Cast Lead of 2008, Hamas has been envisaged as an unbending and self sacrificing institution by the residents of Gaza, which was liable to the protection of the rights of Palestinians; brazenly face the military attacks and discards the stipulations of the Israel, even on the price of the lives of its leaders, for instance, just before the few days of the conclusion of the operation the interior minister of Hamas Said Siam was under attack for killing. Furthermore, Hamas has been looked for the demolition Israeli institutions and head offices. Regardless of the serious flurry Palestinians were proud of Hamas military accomplishments, meanwhile, underestimating the legitimacy of PLO.

The assertiveness on the radicalism unintentionally sustains the Orientalist presumptions that Hamas politics were neither prejudiced and nor influenced by the consolidation of power. Sever devotion to the principles of religion is not determining the features of the political and social life of Hamas. Furthermore, Hamas has not expunged the prospect of conjunction with an adversary



or a political opponent at least for a mean time. Hamas has encountered a chronological chance to avert the destiny of its politics and to turn around its diplomatic relations. Hamas has been diverting steering its wheels from the so called league of resistance and coming closer to its new sponsors: such as Egypt, Qatar and Turkey. (“The Emergence of Hamas as a Regional Political Actor - Elcano Royal Institute,” 2021).

The spectrum of political process of Hamas, and Palestinian and Israeli consultations can be divided into three phases: the first phase includes the preservation of conscientious orientation in order of the denial of political declaration without expatiating on its interpretation; the second phase contains the rejection on the reflection of the involvement of any political arrangement which necessitated the renunciation of Palestinian rights and their prerogative at all; meanwhile, the third phase comprises on the statement of their compliance of the acknowledgement of a treaty with the Israel with specific demands excluding the acceptance of the legitimate existence of Israel on the territory of Palestine. Besides these three phases, there is a room for a fourth phase which is entitled to the reckoning of a short lived provisional peace (tahadiya) based on the situation not as much of rigorousness than which would be obligatory for a long lasting treaty (hudna). These phases indicates that Hamas has evolved from a customary ideologically persistent and an inflexible pose to that, in which it is considering the actuality and the conduct of politics devoid of any ideological acceptance. However, the third phase raises a question that it manifests an intermediate stage which might guide in the direction of gradual harmony with the Israel or it is merely an approach in a stratagem which endeavors to the liberation of Palestine or demolition of Israel (Scham and Abu-Irshaid n.d.)

Furthermore, as soon as Hamas set foot in the politics, it was ostensible through polls that Hamas would obtain a third of the votes at the minimum and probably a lot more in the elections. As per the same polls, Hamas reputation did not erupted from its pervasive support for the radical ideology rather than the disappointment on the corruption of PA and the stagnation of the economy of Palestine. Considering this scenario, Hamas focused on running a platform that would emphasize on reforms and good governance than the struggle for ideology. Accompanied by this plea and its every day liability for the state of lives of approximately one third of the population, Hamas made its position clear as a credible and a substitute to the former PA headship.

Since, June 2007, when Hamas started to influence the politics and society in a small but populated Gaza Strip. The leaders of Hamas noticed that if they were supposed to facilitate about 1.5 million residences through public services, welfare, safety and security they would not be a mere confrontational organization. Hence, Hamas administers the government of Gaza and its security forces by a self proclaimed cabinet Hamas ministers that is guided by Ismail Haniyeh who has also served as a prime minister of PA before the removal of Hamas from the government after June 2007. In the procedure of decision making a movement wide regional shura councils are incorporated which are the politburo of Damascus and the Qassam Brigades leadership. The government directed by Hamas collects revenue from the zakat committees of Gaza and from the



fees of license and other forms of taxes. It also accumulates wealth from foreign supporters. However, Hamas has been accused for tens of millions of dollars smuggling through tunnels.

The augmentation of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt amplified portrayal of Hamas with other Islamic parties in the Middle Eastern countries, in 2012. However, this stimulus faded as soon as the Muslim Brotherhood was coerced to ouster in the mid of 2013, which led to the further alienation of Hamas.

Hamas Services Based on Violence

The alteration of Hamas from a reformist movement to a combative party originated when it began to indulge in political commotion and played its role in the protests in opposition to the illegal occupancy of Israel on the Gaza Strip.

Therefore, just after few years of its establishment it formed its military branch known as the Izz ad-din Al-Qassam Brigades which embarked on the military and civilian targets through its militant attacks in a similar way, which diverted the surveillance of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) towards it.

Eventually, political activism of Hamas began, particularly its actions of force in opposition to Israel in the mid of the 1990s, occurred simultaneously when the United States augmented its position to a non-controversial supremacy in the regional and international politics. The coming of the occurrences of these two together confronted the American Foreign Policy that comprised on two objectives: one of which is the furtherance of political pluralism and the second is the containment of fundamentalist maneuvers.

Hamas is certain in the utilization of aggression and force to accomplish its political activities and it does not conceal its view. The foremost objective of the Hamas behind becoming political activist was the resistance against Israel and the liberation of Palestine from Israel. The leaders of Hamas also consistently relied on the use of force against the Israeli occupation. Hamas, eventually, initiated the actions of martyrdom into its strategies against Israel, which turned into one of the most victorious strategy of Hamas by the time (International Crisis Group. 2004).

Hamas has been very thoughtful and conscious while regulating its political agenda for years and it has frequently released repetitive gestures of its willingness for the initiation of a procedure for contemporaneous existence along with Israel.

Following the first intifada that was outburst in the mid of December in 1987, a group of the leaders belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip gathered in the residency of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, where they founded Hamas which literal meaning is Zeal, as the Islamic Resistance Movement, it was structured on the basis of which it would represent the Muslim Brotherhood in



the acts of the intifada.

As per the analysts, that the security forces directed by Hamas demonstrate an inspiring levels of regulation and effectiveness which have been accomplished in maintaining the order of Gaza, even though the ameliorated professionalized security services the PA has obtained the international attention.

The opinion of the most of the observers is that the government of Hamas continues to be constant and influential regardless the miserable situation and the devastating condition of the infrastructure of Gaza in post Operation Cast Lead of 2008. Hamas has aided through 60 million dollars handouts and in some reports Hamas has divided 1,500-6,000 dollars to the families who suffered losses during the conflict.

As some analysts noticed the symbols that Hamas has been already inclined towards moderate evaluation. They indicate to the readiness to incorporate in the election and to cross the threshold of the Palestinian Legislative Council, it is the institution that was originated as a result of Oslo peace process which was denied by Hamas for a long time. Moreover, numerous declarations had been released by the leaders of Hamas that expressed the flexibility of Hamas, for instance the acknowledgment of “tahdia” and deliberations for “hudna” with the demand of withdrawal of Israel to its 1967 borders.

After captivating the institutions of PA in the Gaza Strip, Hamas has created a judiciary and replaced it with the institutions of authoritarianism. Theoretically, Hamas carries out its administration according to the Palestinian Basic Law which is founded on the bases of sharia, similarly to the legislature of PA: however, in practice it has been more restraining than the requirements of law.

In March, 2018, Hamas acquired the control of protests of tens of thousands Gazans that was instigated from the demonstrations which comprised six weeks of Friday and were called “Great March of Return” alongside the border of Israel. Originally, these protests were under control of independent activists. These protests claimed the lives of more than a hundred Palestinians while thousands of protesters were injured due to the oppressive response from Israel (Barron, 2019).

Impact on Palestinian Politics

The Hamas origination and transformation has particularly impacted Fatah. As a rival of Fatah, there is constant non consent and struggle for power between both parties. Therefore, as soon as Hamas was founded, it turn out to be a big player in the Palestinian and Israel relations as well as domestic politics of Palestine, in order to acquire a double fold program through the equal evolution of a serviceable and a social section, and to compete with its political opponent. Now it looks after several militants dedicated to armed resistance against Israel and is in the procedure of the development of back up armed force that comprises on thousands of members. It has been



liable for the numerous actions that created terror kidnapping and assassinations to suicide bombings and rocket assaults; meanwhile, the social wing of Hamas (DAWA) has evolved a system of charities, educational, religious educational and cultural organizations, pointing out Hamas as a contributor of social services in opposition to the PA which bears the accusation of corruption.

The fighting between Hamas and Fatah escorted towards intense variance in the Palestinian politics along with the separation policy from Israel. It drafted Hamas control over Gaza as the de facto, while Fatah ruled over the West Bank and was in charge of the PA as well.

Hamas along with the Fatah regulate the politics of Palestine, even though certain Palestinians have been involved in sorting out and in service without and beyond the efforts of these political parties. The inception of new political parties have been confined by the conception that the potential utilization of the political system of Palestine by the already existing political parties and due to their militant forces and their widespread network of sponsorships ("Political Parties," 2022).

After taking the authority of the 365 square kilometers of Gaza Strip of Hamas, the Palestinian power began to initiate a sequence of procedures to confine the capability of Hamas to rule over Gaza. Through prohibiting the security, judiciary and other sectors of the government, the PA established a vacuum that was devotedly filled by Hamas. The assertiveness on the Islamists authority on the all PA institutions, made Gazans more reliant on the power of Hamas.

Though, Hamas is liable for bringing down the administration that was indulged in corruption and enhanced the protection of Gaza, yet it is suffering immensely from tough sanctions on economy, escalating the rate of poverty and unemployment and an infrastructure that is devastated, in 2007 (Janssen, 2009).

In January 2005, on the platform of presidential election campaign of Abbas, who was liable for vivid variation of the presiding party Fatah from Hamas as it asserted on peacefulness and the domination of PA over arms, and gradually its unsuccessfulness to interpret the mandate of board which was meant to the serious reforms or valuable authorization. The incompetence of Abbas made it effortless for Hamas to step in the politics in the following year. Hamas has acknowledged a momentary cease fire with the Israel on the demand of assimilation of Hamas into PLO as well as in the PA electoral system. Since this deal had no concerns on the armament and violence of Hamas perpetually and led to the destruction of Abbas political reputation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Hamas has played a complex and multifaceted role in the Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, it has provided vital social services to the Palestinian people, particularly in the areas



of education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation. These services have helped to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and have contributed to the development of a sense of community and national identity. On the other hand, Hamas has also been involved in armed struggle against Israel, which has led to violence and instability in the region. While Hamas's military actions have been seen as a legitimate response to Israeli occupation and aggression by many Palestinians, they have also been criticized by others as a form of terrorism that has harmed innocent civilians and hindered the peace process. It is important to note that Hamas is not the only actor in the Palestinian conflict, and that the conflict has many root causes and complexities that cannot be reduced to a single organization or individual. The Palestinian people have a long history of resistance and struggle against occupation, and Hamas is just one of many groups that have emerged in response to this struggle. Ultimately, a lasting resolution to the Palestinian conflict will require a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement that addresses the underlying issues of occupation, self-determination, and equal rights for all Palestinians. While Hamas's military actions may have played a role in the conflict, it is unlikely that they will be sufficient to bring about a lasting peace on their own. A negotiated settlement that involves all parties to the conflict, including Hamas, and addresses the root causes of the conflict, is the best way to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region.



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