

The Long, Disgusting History of the Al-Aqsa Libel



Palestinian demonstrators clash with Israeli police at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound on April 15, 2022. (Photo by AHMAD GHARABLI / AFP)

by Eric Rozenman

Israel keeps trying to extinguish Palestinian rioting on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, the sacred site encompassing Islam's al-Aqsa Mosque and the Jews' Western Wall. But the Hamas terror organization keeps encouraging the violence, [and pushing for more.](#)

Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' leader in the Gaza Strip, recently called for Palestinian Arabs in eastern Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Israel to ready their guns, knives, and axes for more [attacks on Jews.](#) Some years ago, when Sinwar was an Israeli prisoner, surgeons removed a brain tumor and [saved his life.](#)

In thanks, Sinwar continues to repeat a big lie that has sparked countless Arab-on-Jew violent attacks over the past 100 years. This is the ever-potent fabrication that [“the Jews endanger Al-Aqsa!”](#)

The Al-Aqsa mosque was built on the Temple Mount by Muslim conquerors early in the 700s. It later became identified with the Koran’s geographically unspecified “furthest mosque.” That made it, after the two holy places in Mecca, Islam’s “third most sacred” shrine.

This status ensures the mosque’s focus as one of the most incendiary of Palestinian-Israeli hot button issues. The cry that “the Jews threaten Al-Aqsa” has been a call for violence ever since Haj Amin al-Husseini used it to spark massacres in British Mandatory Palestine in the 1920s.

Al-Husseini, the British-appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, spent World War II in Berlin making pro-Nazi shortwave radio [broadcasts in Arabic](#). He also supported the Final Solution. And, sadly, his Al-Aqsa libel lives on today.

In 1969, a mentally ill, non-Jewish Australian set fire to Al-Aqsa, damaging the roof. But as late as 2018, an advisor to Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas was blaming “a Jewish terrorist of Australian origin,” and claiming that Al-Aqsa was “still burning today, as long as the noble sanctuary and the holy city [of Jerusalem] are violated by [the Israeli occupation.](#)”

Fathi Hazem is a colonel in the PA’s security forces. But he is also the father of Ra’ad Fathi Hazem, who was killed by security officers after murdering three Israelis in an April 7 Tel Aviv terror attack. The elder Hazem praised his son as a “martyr,” saying, “our people wants [sic] the al-Aqsa mosque ...”

During Ramadan, Israeli police repeatedly cleared hundreds of stone-throwing Hamas sympathizers out of Al-Aqsa. They did so

to allow tens of thousands of Muslims to pray there. But Palestinian propaganda portrayed the crowd control as proof that Israel threatened the mosque.

On April 17, an imam on the PA's television network offered a Ramadan prayer that included the following: "Allah, delight us with the conquest and liberation of the al-Aqsa mosque. ... Allah, delight us with the extermination of [the evil Jews.](#)"

The TV imam merely echoed President Mahmoud Abbas. He invoked the "Jews endanger Al-Aqsa" libel in an infamous Sept. 16, 2015 speech, broadcast on the PA's TV channel, which helped incite the "knife intifada": "The al-Aqsa [mosque] is ours, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is ours, and they [Jews] have no right to defile them with their filthy feet. ... We bless every drop of blood that is [spilled in Jerusalem.](#)"

Hamas resorted to the Al-Aqsa lie in starting its 11-day missile war against Israel in 2021, and continues that libel to this day.

That's what the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been about; Palestinian leaders incite the murder of Jews and destruction of Israel, and they use lies like the al-Aqsa myth to do it.

When it comes to confidence building, Israel should demand something from Palestinian leaders – adherence finally to their 1990s peace process commitment to end anti-Israeli incitement. They can start by repudiating the "Jews endanger Al-Aqsa" lie.

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