

IRAN'S ANTI-ISRAEL IDEOLOGY: QUDS DAY

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Iran’s Anti-Israel Ideology: Quds Day

Quds Day (“Jerusalem Day”), held on the last Friday of Ramadan, is an annual day of protest organized by the Iranian government against Israel. While nominally about Jerusalem, the Quds Day rally serves as a forum for regime figures to call for hostilities against Israel and the liberation of Palestine, envisaging the inevitable elimination of the “Zionist regime.” “Death to Israel” is a common chant at the rallies, often accompanied by “Death to America. The rhetoric often slides into overt anti-Semitism including characterizations of Zionism as a cosmic evil and statements denying the Holocaust.

Background

On August 7, 1979, shortly after the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed Quds Day as an annual day of solidarity against the “usurper Israel.” **He declared:**

“I invite Muslims all over the globe to consecrate the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as Al-Quds Day and to proclaim the international solidarity of Muslims in support of the legitimate rights of the Muslim people of Palestine. For many years, I have been notifying the Muslims of the danger posed by the usurper Israel which today has intensified its savage attacks against the Palestinian brothers and sisters, and which, in the south of Lebanon in particular, is continually bombing Palestinian homes in the hope of crushing the Palestinian struggle. I ask all the Muslims of the world and the Muslim governments to join together to sever the hand of the usurper and its supporters. I call on the Muslims of the world to select as Al-Quds Day the last Friday in the holy month of Ramadan- which is itself a determining period and can also be the determiner of the Palestinian people’s fate- and through a ceremony demonstrating the solidarity of Muslims world-wide, announce their support for the legitimate rights of the Muslim people. I ask God Almighty for the victory of the Muslims over the infidels.”

Quds Day fits into Khomeini’s revolutionary paradigm as a show of resistance in support of “oppressed peoples” against “arrogant, oppressive powers,” and Khomeini went so far as to issue a **fatwa** declaring the elimination of the “Zionist entity” as a religious duty incumbent on Muslims.

Iranian politicians **abidingly attend** Quds Day rallies and deliver anti-Israel diatribes to showcase their steadfast commitment to the regime’s opposition to Israel. Tehran’s May 2019 Quds Day festivities were centered around Iran’s rejection of the Trump administration’s forthcoming Israeli-Palestinian peace plan, branded as “the deal of the century.” The procession

featured numerous examples of **incitement**, including demonstrators burning American and Israeli flags and effigies of President Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In remarks to reporters, President Rouhani **declared**, "Palestinians will definitely emerge victorious in confrontation with the Zionist aggressors. ... The issue of Deal of the Century will undoubtedly turn into the bankruptcy of the century and will certainly not yield results."

Following the rally, the participants issued a communique in which they vowed to reject negotiations and back armed "resistance" as the only viable path to advance the Palestinian national movement. The statement **proclaimed**, "Liberation of the al-Quds and all other Palestinian territories from the Zionist (Israel) occupation is the main goal of the Islamic world. The only way to settle the issue of Palestine is to press ahead with resistance, to allow for the return of all displaced Palestinians from around the world to their motherland, and to hold a free referendum to decide the fate of their country."



Quds Day 2020 Poster

Quds Day in 2020 took place on Friday, May 22. Iran, which has been especially hard hit by the coronavirus, weighed **canceling** the 2020 demonstrations or moving them online. Ultimately, Iran decided to put on a modified Quds Day, which underscored that even a pandemic would not deter the Iranian regime from holding its annual display of demonization of Israel.

Ahead of the 2020 Quds Day, the Office of Iran's Supreme Leader also released an anti-Semitic poster calling for "the final solution: resistance until referendum," evoking Nazi-era rhetoric. The poster depicted Jerusalem following a Muslim reconquest with a poster of slain former IRGC-Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani prominently displayed on the city's walls.

Quds Day Around the World

While ostensibly Quds Day's primary focus is on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iran sees this localized struggle as part of a broader global initiative. By hosting Quds Day celebrations around the world, Iran seeks to frame the Palestinian struggle as a pan-Islamic cause, and to claim the leadership mantle as the preeminent defender of the Palestinians.

Iranian-affiliated agents and entities have helped grow Quds Day internationally, **organizing and financing** events in over 80 countries annually, including western cities such as **New York, London, Berlin, and Toronto**. In addition to shows of support for the Palestinians and denunciations of Israel, displays of support for Iran and Hezbollah – including flags, and posters depicting Ayatollah Khomeini, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah – are a staple at Quds Day events worldwide.

Quds Day and Regime Quotables



Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, 2020

Foreign Minister Zarif used a derogatory Persian slur against Jews, calling them “juhood” during an interview with Iranian media: “I cannot imagine any circumstances under which we would officially recognize Israel...What is our solution? [Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei] has stated the solution. It is not throwing the juhood into the sea, or a military attack...The supreme leader has said what the solution is...Our solution is a popular referendum.” The comment caused great controversy, forcing Zarif to walk back his comments on Twitter.



Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, 2020

“The next question to ask is: why is it a crime to raise doubts about the Holocaust? Why should anyone who writes about such doubts be imprisoned while insulting the Prophet...is allowed?”



Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, 2019

“The message of (rallies) today is that al-Quds is not up for sale.”



President Hassan Rouhani, 2019

“The plots that the global arrogance and aggressors have hatched against Palestine and al-Quds will get nowhere. We have no doubts that ultimate victory will be for justice and for Palestine.”



President, Hassan Rouhani, 2018
"Israel can never feel that it is in a safe place."



General Yahya Rahim Safavi, 2018
"The results of the great rallies on Quds Day are becoming increasingly evident every year... The occupied territories have turned into an unsafe place for the Zionists, and Israel's dream to make those lands a safe haven for Jewish European migrants and other occupiers is just an illusion."



Hassan Rouhani, 2017
"The message of Quds Day is that of hatred towards the occupying and usurping regime (Israel) as well as support for the oppressed nation of Palestine."



Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, 2017
"Israel is the most malignant terrorist in the history."



Deputy IRGC Commander Brig. Gen. Hossein Salami, 2016
"In Lebanon alone over 100,000 missiles are ready at all times to fly ... at the heart of the Zionist regime. Tens of thousands of other missiles ... have been planted across the Islamic world and are awaiting orders so that with the push of a button a sinister and dark

dot on the political geography of the world (Israel) disappears forever,"



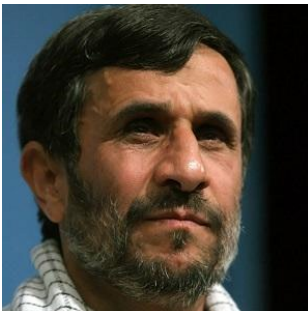
Hassan Rouhani, 2014

"In previous Quds Day rallies, the cry was for the land of Muslims and dear Quds, which has been occupied by the occupier, be freed and people return to their homeland. But this year, we are witnessing ... genocide in the Palestinian territories."



President-elect Hassan Rouhani, 2013

"In our region there's been a wound for years on the body of the Muslim world under the shadow of the occupation of the holy land of Palestine and the beloved al-Qods (Jerusalem)"



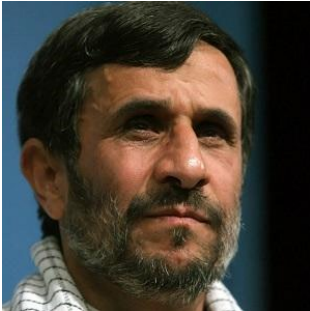
President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 2012

"The Zionist regime and the Zionists are a cancerous tumour. The nations of the region will soon finish off the usurper Zionists in the Palestinian land... A new Middle East will definitely be formed. With the grace of God and help of the nations, in the new Middle East there will be no trace of the Americans and Zionists."



President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 2010

"If the leaders of the region do not have the guts, then the people of the region are capable of removing the Zionist regime from the world scene."



President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 2009

"The pretext (Holocaust) for the creation of the Zionist regime (Israel) is false ... It is a lie based on an unprovable and mythical claim."
"Confronting the Zionist regime is a national and religious duty."
"This regime (Israel) will not last long. ... This regime has no future. Its life has come to an end."



Former President Akbar Hashemi

Rafsanjani, 1998

"The Zionist regime is a fake government and homeland which is shaped with millions of homeless Palestinians and hundreds of thousands of Muslim martyrs. I'm sure that in the future we will have Islamic Palestine. I'm sure nothing will remain as the territory of Israel."



Former President Akbar Hashemi

Rafsanjani, 1994

"Can Israel really remain? In my opinion it cannot. That artificial entity cannot survive."



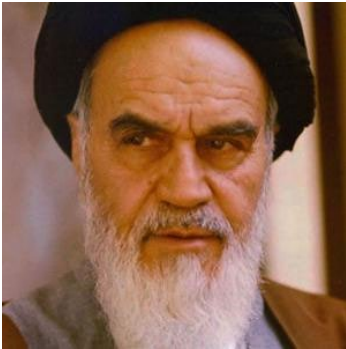
Parliament Speaker Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, 1989

"If in retaliation for every Palestinian martyred in Palestine they will kill and execute, not inside Palestine, five Americans or Britons or Frenchmen, they (Israelis) could not continue these wrongs. It is not hard to kill Americans or Frenchman. It is a bit difficult to kill (Israelis). But there are so many (Americans and Frenchman) elsewhere in the world."



President Ali Khamenei, 1987

Palestinians "should resist and fight Zionism. This is the message of the whole Iranian people who chant the 'Death to Israel' slogan."



Ayatollah Khomeini, 1979

"I call on the Muslims of the world as well as on all Muslim governments to join forces to cut down this usurper (Israel) and its supporters."