

Israel not interested in peace



By Belén Fernández
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OPINION

Just when you thought the situation in the Middle East couldn't get any more incendiary, the assassination of Hamas's political chief Ismail Haniyeh has propelled regional tensions to a whole new level of bad. Haniyeh was killed in a strike late on Tuesday in Tehran, the capital of Iran, where he had attended the inauguration ceremony of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. The assassination is without doubt the handiwork of — who else? — “the state of Israel,” although the Israeli cabinet seems to have adopted a “no comment” policy for the moment. One Israeli official, Minister of Heritage Amichai Eliyahu, apparently couldn't contain his exuberance, and took to X to proclaim: “This is the right way to clean the world of this filth ... Haniyeh's death makes the world a little better.” In his social media post, Eliyahu also swore that there would be “no more imaginary peace/surrender agreements”, and that “the iron hand that will strike is the one that will bring peace and a little comfort and strengthen our ability to live in peace with those who desire peace.” That's a lot of usage of the word “peace” for folks who fundamentally don't want, well, peace. To be sure, killing one of the main negotiators for a cease-fire deal in the Gaza Strip is a pretty good way to thwart any prospect of peace for the time being.



Late Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh
● AFP

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And what do you know? As Reuters noted in its obituary for Haniyeh, the man was “seen by many diplomats as a moderate compared with the more hard-line members” of Hamas. Anyway, it has long been Israel's modus operandi to squelch any opportunities for so-called “moderation” in order to justify its own perennial maniacal behaviour. In a recent Al Jazeera article, titled “Why does Israel step up its attacks when Gaza cease-fire talks

advance?”, journalist Justin Salhani reflected on the intensification of Israel's current genocidal assault in the Gaza Strip even as cease-fire talks were progressing. Salhani recalled a certain relevant precedent during the second Intifada in 2002, in which the Fatah-allied Tanzim military wing was reportedly “set to announce a unilateral cease-fire”. Then, Israel dropped a one-tonne bomb on a Hamas leader's Gaza City home, and that was the end of that. Now, Israel has officially killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians in

Gaza in less than 10 months, though the true death toll is assumed to be astronomically higher. So much for the “ability to live in peace,” to borrow Eliyahu's words. Of course, if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu allows the war to end, he will have to live with a lot of things he doesn't want to live with — like domestic opposition, corruption charges, and other stuff that's no fun. In May, the chief prosecutor for the International

Criminal Court applied for an arrest warrant for Netanyahu for alleged war crimes committed in Gaza — an eventuality that is clearly best avoided by simply continuing to commit more war crimes. And just to be absolutely sure that there remains no conceivable possibility of peace in the near term, Israel is doing its best to provoke its enemies into committing bellicose acts that Israel itself can then use as an excuse to keep waging war.

Just this Tuesday, Israel struck a residential building in the Lebanese capital of Beirut, killing a woman and two children and injuring 74, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health. The target of the strike was a Hezbollah commander accused by Israel of masterminding the July 27 rocket attack on the town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights that killed at least 12 children. Hezbollah, which normally claims responsibility for its ac-

tions, has vehemently denied perpetrating the Majdal Shams attack — which, it bears underscoring, took place in a territory that is illegally occupied by Israel. But, hey, it was a good enough reason to bomb Beirut. The assassination of Haniyeh in Iranian territory, meanwhile, gives Iran no choice but to respond to Israel in some sort of military fashion, which it has already shown it is more than capable of doing. Following the deadly April Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital of Damascus, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel. Granted, this was more of a show of force than an attempt to cause damage. But by assassinating Haniyeh in Tehran, Israel is literally playing with fire. In order to derail cease-fire prospects and keep up the killing in Gaza, then, it seems Israel is going to end up with a whole lot more regional blood on its hands. The Cambridge English dictionary defines a “rogue state” as a “nation that is considered very dangerous to other nations” — and there's no nation more rogue these days than the “state of Israel”.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) consults with military commanders at the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv, in a photo released soon after an Israeli strike on a Hezbollah target in Beirut, July 30, 2024.
● PMO



Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh will only make Hamas stronger



By Emad Moussa
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PERSPECTIVE

Israel's double assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's political leader, in Tehran, and Fuad Shukur, a senior military figure in Hezbollah, in Beirut, on July 31 has sent shockwaves around the world. A major escalation that could spiral out of control into a regional war; Israel has lashed out, attacking two sovereign nations in 24 hours, all whilst knees deep in mass atrocities in Gaza. Assassinating a Hamas leader in Tehran may ultimately be symbolic. Whilst Ismail Haniyeh played a very different role to Yasser Arafat of the PLO or George Habash of the PLFP, Haniyeh was still a negotiator in the cease-fire talks. By killing Haniyeh, Israel has proven, once again, that it will greenlight the assassination of those party to cease-fire negotiations. But this is nothing new. In fact, Ismail Haniyeh is just the latest in a long history of Israeli assassinations.

In July 2002, at the height of the Second Intifada, an Israeli F-16 dropped a one-tonne bomb on al-Daraj neighbourhood in Gaza City. The target was Salah Shehadeh, the

head of Hamas' military wing al-Qassam Brigades. An entire residential block was destroyed, killing Shehadeh and his family, along with 15 other people including seven children.

The brutal raid was followed by a wave of assassinations of Hamas politicians and military officials, climaxing with the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of the movement, in

March 2002. An Apache helicopter fired a Hellfire missile at him as he was being wheeled out of a Gaza mosque after prayer. The 67-year-old and nine other worshippers were killed.

A month later, Israel assassinated Hamas' senior official, Dr. Abdul-Aziz Rantisi. And to complete the circle, in 2012, Israel killed Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari.