

Ideals cannot be assassinated



By Javad Shamloo
Journalist

OPINION

Abu Ubaida, the spokesperson for Hamas's military wing al-Qassam Brigades, was reportedly assassinated in an Israeli terrorist attack. We knew him as clear-eyed and wearied, with words that hit hard and a pointing finger raised only against the enemy as a sign of threat. Yet, in recent months, Abu Ubaida had come to mean something else. For supporters of the Resistance Axis, he was like a survivor.

He was one of Hamas's key figures who, unlike Haniyeh, Sinwar, Zaif, and other Hamas commanders, was still alive and, for some, symbolized Hamas's survival. The occupying regime's main response to the epic of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was to clamp down on individuals and kill Resistance commanders. The regime views the Resistance Axis as a collection of individuals set on wiping out this utter darkness. It has never wanted to understand — and even if it has, has never admitted in word or deed — that the dream of ending the occupation of Palestine is not merely the wish of a certain number of nationalists, Islamists, or Shias in Palestine and across the region, but rather a deep and long-standing desire that could be the common ground of all the diverse peoples of West Asia.

It must be acknowledged that this common, widespread ideal of liberating Palestine cannot come close to realization without the support of the region's governments and states, and much of the success the Resistance Axis has so far racked up is due to the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state structure. However, it is clear that a movement deeply rooted in the public outlook of several nations can never be wiped out by assassinating its leaders, even if it temporarily scales back its military activity and lies in wait for a chance to rise again — much like Hezbollah rightly stepped up after the martyrdom of the Resistance's Sayyed.

Putting this broad view aside, now that we are on the cusp of the second anniversary of the historic Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, has the Resistance Axis, militarily speaking, reached its end? It's undeniable that this Axis has lost a great number of experienced and capable commanders (Abu Ubaida being the latest martyr); Severe damage has been dealt to its manpower, equipment, and military infrastructure, especially in Gaza and Lebanon; And the fall of Damascus has made the frontline's connection to its rear difficult. Can these events be taken as a sign of the Resistance's defeat, or the enemy getting its way — even if only temporarily?

To answer, we must weigh the Zionist enemy's gains against the price it has paid for them. First: nearly two years have gone by since October 7, 2023, and Israel's unprecedented international isolation remains the most prominent consequence of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the events that followed. A regime that once portrayed itself as "the only democracy in the Middle East" with



Images of the reportedly assassinated Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Ubaida, on the right in this mural in Bourj al-Barajne, southern Beirut, are a common sight in Palestinian refugee communities in Lebanon.
● DIEGO IBARRA SANCHEZ/
THE NEW YORK TIMES

the unwavering backing of the West now faces waves of global distrust and criticism.

The harshness of these critiques has forced the tasteless White House occupant to acknowledge that the regime can no longer carry on with the Gaza genocide. Donald Trump admitted, "[The Zionists] will have to end this war, and there is no doubt that it harms Israel. Israel may win the war, but it is not gaining influence in the world of public relations, and that is harmful to it." He added that the Zionist lobby is losing leverage in Congress.

European countries, long strategic partners of Tel Aviv, have seen massive public protests break out against the continuation of the war and the slaughter of civilians in Gaza one after another. Some governments had no choice but to put on hold arms sales or reconsider diplomatic ties with Israel.

Most recently, Belgium's foreign minister declared in French on X (formerly, Twitter), "Palestine will be recognized by Belgium during the UN session. And firm sanctions are being imposed on the Israeli [cabinet]. European support will be given to measures suspending cooperation with Israel. Twelve strong sanctions will be imposed at the national level, including a ban on the import of products from settlements, a review of government procurement policies with Israeli companies, [and] restrictions on consular assistance to Belgians living in settlements deemed illegal under international law."

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tions. The more Israel sinks into this quagmire of isolation, the more it loses moral and political legitimacy worldwide. How can the assassination of Resistance commanders ever make up for such a cost?

The costs Israel has paid aren't limited to the destruction of its global reputation. Militarily, the occupying regime has failed to shore up its security against attacks from Hamas, Yemen, Hezbollah, and Iran. While the military, economic, and political damage the regime has suffered in these attacks won't necessarily lead to its immediate downfall, it proves to the peoples of the region and even to the residents of the occupied territories that Israel is vulnerable. The memory of this currently two-year battle will not be erased from the minds of West Asia's peoples and Palestine's residents but will serve as a catalyst for fiercer storms,

more true promises, and sharper swords.

Apart from this mental and historic impact, the regime faced multiple political, social, and military blows after Operation Al-Aqsa Storm — the details of which are beyond our scope here and familiar to the reader. These very damages led the regime to call for a cease-fire after 12 days of war with Iran. Today, Israel is more trapped than ever between the contradictions of temporary military successes and lack of lasting legitimacy, and the shield of the regime's reputation, much like its Iron Dome, is in a laughable state. Even if the storm lies in wait, it is in fact reigniting and preparing for another uprising from the ashes; Ideals cannot be assassinated.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper *Resalat*.



People raise Palestinian flags as they gather around a statue of the late South African President Nelson Mandela to celebrate a landmark case filed by South Africa at the International Court of Justice, accusing Israel of genocide, in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on January 10, 2024.
● MARCO LONGARI/AFP



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US should be skeptical about ‘Iran-backed’ fighters

By Harrison Berger
Independent journalist

OPINION

Israel carried out air strikes on August 28 that killed the civilian political leaders of Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement. Though they grossly violated international law, the bombings were nonetheless celebrated in Washington.

Corporate media like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal reported the strikes as a "symbolic and psychological blow" that demonstrated "improved Israeli intelligence" against the Houthis and their Iranian sponsors, while neocons like Mark Dubowitz of the mysteriously funded Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a pro-Israel think tank, applauded the attack on the "Houthi-controlled terror leadership".

But despite the "mission accomplished" attitude from Israel and its neoconservative loyalists in America, the attacks will likely do very little to stop the Houthis, whose campaigns reflect Yemen's own history of resistance rather than Iranian control. The group remains extraordinarily independent, producing much of its own weaponry and pursuing a strategy driven by its own political grievances with Israel and the United States.

Their central grievance is the US-backed Israeli genocide and famine currently being perpetrated against the Palestinians in Gaza, with whom the Houthis identify — because, as political scientist Norman Finkelstein explains, "What was done to Gaza was done to them."

Before Israel set out to fulfill the demands of its ultra-nationalist politicians to "destroy all of Gaza's infrastructure to its foundation" and "erase the Gaza strip from the Earth," Yemen was the country considered to have the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, with over 23 million people in need of humanitarian assistance by 2022. Yemen's humanitarian crisis, like Gaza's today, has been entirely man-made. More specifically, it has been perpetrated by Saudi Arabia, the US, and Israel. They imposed a brutal blockade and bombing campaign that reportedly caused the deaths of nearly 377,000 people in Yemen between 2015 and 2021, more than 85,000 of whom were children who starved to death.

The Houthis' identification with the Palestinians of Gaza is therefore neither rooted in religious "fundamentalism" nor in subservience to Tehran — it reflects a deep sense of solidarity forged through parallel suffering at the hands of US-backed clients in the Middle East. This explains why, despite the assassination of its civilian leadership, the Houthis have vowed to "escalate [their] operations as long as Israel continues its policy of genocide and starvation".

The corporate media largely ignores these motivations, obfuscating the political grievances of Israel's enemies by recasting them as irrational and intrac-



Protesters, mainly Ansarullah (Houthi) supporters, demonstrate in support of Palestinians in Gaza, at Sabeen Square in Sanaa, Yemen, on August 29, 2025.
● REUTERS

table. Treating the Houthis as mere Iranian proxies has about as much explanatory power — and serves the same propagandistic function — as George W. Bush's claim that America suffered the 9/11 attacks because "they hate us for our freedoms." By erasing the role of US military action on behalf of Israel in generating the very groups that threaten it, Israel and its American lobby are able to portray Houthi attacks as further evidence of a region-wide Iranian conspiracy to destroy Israel. This Axis of Resistance, the story goes, simply can't be reasoned with and potentially threatens the United States as well, therefore requiring unlimited funds and unconditional support from American taxpayers.

As the Israeli cabinet pushes President Donald Trump to attack its regional adversaries, Washington ought to be skeptical of Israel's intelligence about them, especially regarding the purported threat posed by the so-called "Iran-backed" network of fighter groups. It was with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's encour-

agement that the US launched its own air campaign against Yemen in March, an intense bombing which failed to deter Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping lanes but killed hundreds of civilians. That bombing campaign revealed, among other things, that US and Israeli intelligence on Yemen remains outdated and often wildly inaccurate. Revealing their ignorance of Houthi operations, the Pentagon may even have relied on anonymous X accounts to coordinate targeting, a method that led directly to air strikes that killed innocent civilians.

Further evidence of US and Israeli ignorance is the continued deployment of expensive MQ-9 Reaper drones over Yemen, dozens of which have been shot down by Houthi surface-to-air missiles. That the Pentagon is willing to risk hundreds of millions of dollars on these missions underscores how little Washington actually knows about Houthi capabilities and positions.

Yet despite the demonstrable shortcomings of Israeli and American intelligence, US analysts continue to treat the

Houthis as directed by Iran and motivated by Islamic fundamentalism. Even attacks on American MQ-9 drones are routinely cited as proof of Tehran's vast arms-smuggling network, which we are told supplies the Houthis with the SAM missiles to bring the drones down.

But as reporting from Drop Site News and other independent media has shown, the Houthi movement produces a substantial portion of its own weaponry, rendering it largely independent of foreign support. That the Houthis keep their arsenals and bases well-hidden and fortified helps to explain why Israel chose to target the Houthis' civilian political leadership rather than its military commanders.

Houthi self-sufficiency exposes a striking irony: While the Houthi arsenal is in large measure indigenously produced, Israel's weaponry is mostly foreign-made and funded by American taxpayers. Like the bombs that drop every month or so in Syria and Lebanon and every day in Gaza, the bombs that fall on Yemen are financed by Washington.

The persistence of Houthi operations, despite assassination campaigns, bombings, and sanctions, demonstrates that their movement will not be stopped with bombs and bullets. As Trump himself acknowledged after concluding his own air strikes on Yemen, even though "we hit them very hard," the Houthis have "a great capacity to withstand punishment," adding that "there's a lot of bravery there."

The fortitude and capabilities of the Houthis cannot be explained away by alleged Iranian control. To reduce them to Tehran's puppets is to erase their actual grievances and the solidarity with Gaza that drives their campaign.

It is precisely their shared suffering — not foreign directives — that explains why the Houthis have been more willing than any other group in the region to take up arms for Gaza, and why Washington's blank-check support for Israel's wars will not stop them. Indeed, it will only deepen their resolve.

The article first appeared on The American Conservative.



The campaigns of the Ansarullah (Houthis) reflect Yemen's own history of resistance rather than Iranian control. The group remains extraordinarily independent, producing much of its own weaponry and pursuing a strategy driven by its own political grievances with Israel and the United States. Their central grievance is the US-backed Israeli genocide and famine currently being perpetrated against the Palestinians in Gaza, with whom the Houthis identify — because, as political scientist Norman Finkelstein explains, "What was done to Gaza was done to them."



A student stands in the ruins of one of his former classrooms, which was destroyed in June 2015, at the Aal Okab school in Saada, Yemen. Students continue their lessons in UNICEF tents nearby.
● GILES CLARKE/UNOCHA