



June 5, 2017

Anti-Israel Incitement in the Palestinian Authority: An analysis of its roots and aspects¹

What Is Incitement?

1. **Incitement is generally defined as the deliberate provocation of unlawful, violent or criminal behavior. However, I would expand the definition to include inculcating a belief in an extremist ideology, concept or policy that is liable to cause people to commit violent or illegal acts.**²
2. There are various types of incitement: to violence, terrorism, hatred, anti-Semitism, etc. **Fatah and the Palestinian Authority (PA) practice incitement to terrorism and violence against Israelis and incitement to hatred of the State of Israel.**

Inciting Terrorism and Violence as an Expression of the PA's Policy of Popular Terrorism (the So-Called "Popular Resistance")

3. The term "**incitement to terrorism and violence**," when dealing with entities, organizations or countries, is, in my opinion, limited to symptoms. **Incitement**, as defined above, **is not independent behavior but rather a function of ideology and/or policy**. The **root of the PA and Fatah's incitement** to terrorism and violence against Israel is their **policy, and even world view**. Thus before a discussion of incitement to terrorism and violence, we have to examine the policy and world view behind it.

4. From its inception, **the Fatah movement adopted the concept of "armed struggle" as its central strategic tool against Israel**. Its terrorist attacks against

¹ This report is based on a lecture by Col. (Res.) Dr. Reuven Erlich, director of the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center. It was delivered during public deliberations of the Israeli Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on the subject of "The policy of the Palestinian Authority regarding anti-Israel incitement," on May 29, 2017. The deliberations were broadcast live by the Israeli Knesset TV channel.

² Oxford English and Merriam-Webster Dictionaries

Israel and incitement to terrorism and violence have been manifestations of the concept. Even after the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, **the official Palestinian establishment led by Yasser Arafat continued inciting acts of terrorism and violence**, which increased dramatically with the second intifada.

5. With the death of Arafat (2004) and the end of the second intifada (2005) there was a significant decrease in the extent of anti-Israel incitement and a change in its nature (alongside a decrease in the extent and change in nature of terrorist attacks). **However, terrorism and incitement did not disappear with the end of the second intifada, they merely took a different form.**

6. **Terrorism, violence and incitement, in their current forms, are an implementation on the ground of the political-strategic decision made eight years ago by the Sixth Fatah Conference** in August 2009, which **adopted the strategy of "popular resistance" (i.e., popular terrorism)**. The strategy was reaffirmed by Mahmoud Abbas at the Seventh Fatah Conference held in Ramallah (November 29 – December 21, 2016), where it was **decided to continue the "popular resistance."**

7. **Mahmoud Abbas has consistently claimed the "popular resistance" is non-violent (*muqawama silmiya*).**³ However, developments on the ground since the Sixth Conference, and especially since October 2015, have shown that **the term "non-violent popular resistance" is clearly a euphemism for a Fatah and PA policy supporting popular terrorism and violence** against Israeli civilians and members of the Israeli security forces. **On the other hand, the PA opposes "military terrorism" and "an armed struggle," which are strategies preferred by Hamas** (and which include suicide bombings and shooting attacks). Military-type terrorism and an armed struggle have not been rejected by Fatah in principle, but **are regarded as tactics which do not serve the needs of the Palestinian people at the present time, and which are liable to strengthen Hamas in Judea and Samaria.**

8. Most of the popular terrorism attacks carried out during the past eight years have involved **throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, which occur on a daily basis and can be lethal.** Occasionally Palestinians carry out stabbing and vehicular attacks (knives and cars are considered "cold weapons" and therefore can "legitimately" be

³ For example, in October 2015, at the height of the wave of Palestinian popular terrorism, Mahmoud Abbas said, "We don't use violence and force. We believe in peace and the popular resistance. It is our right and duty to continue, as long as there is aggression [from Israel]..."

used as part of the "popular resistance"). At the same time, **the PA's security forces maintain security coordination with the Israeli security forces to keep Hamas from gaining power** by preventing military-type terrorist attacks (which are liable to spin out of control and harm the PA).

9. In addition to popular terrorism attacks Palestinians also carry out military-type attacks (mostly shooting attacks), which are not considered part of the "popular resistance." Generally speaking the PA does not condemn military-type attacks, even when Israelis are killed. In some instances the PA has condemned such attacks, but usually the condemnation is weak and intertwined with acts allegedly carried out by Israel and minimized in the Palestinian media.

10. Popular terrorism (which is defined as "peaceful popular resistance") between August 2009 and September 14, 2015⁴ took the lives of fifty Israelis. Between September 14, 2015 and today it has taken the lives of an additional fifty Israelis. **Thus popular terrorism has cost the lives of 100 people, most of them civilians, since the Sixth Fatah Conference.** It cannot be considered non-violent "popular resistance," it is popular terrorism waged against Israel in Judea and Samaria and inside Israel, supported by the PA and Fatah and accompanied by a determined international anti-Israel campaign.

Overview of Fatah and PA Support for Popular Terrorism

11. The following have been **the main manifestations of the PA and Fatah's support for the "popular resistance"** since the beginning of the wave of popular terrorism (September 2015):

A. Political and media support:

1) **The PA and Fatah do not condemn terrorist attacks against Israel**, even those carried out within Israeli territory, including those that cause the deaths of civilians and those that cannot be included in "popular resistance." However, as opposed to Hamas, **the PA does not openly and directly call for the killing of Israelis, at least not in the traditional media (newspapers, radio, TV). On the other hand, on the social networks Fatah incitement to terrorism and violence is sometimes more outspoken and direct.**

⁴ Between the Sixth Fatah Conference and the eve of the wave of popular terrorism.



Encouragement for stabbing attacks: a Fatah notice calling for Palestinians in Jerusalem to stab Israelis (Twitter account of Fatah's bureau of mobilization and organization, October 5, 2015).



Encouragement for vehicular attacks: the Facebook page of the Shabiba movement (Fatah's student faction) at al-Najah University in Nablus. The post was uploaded on November 6, 2014, after a deadly vehicular attack in Jerusalem. The Arabic reads, "Resist, even with your car" (Facebook page of the Shabiba faction at al-Najah University, November 6, 2014). The previous day, November 5, 2014, a Palestinian terrorist carried out a vehicular attack in the Sheikh Jarrah of Jerusalem, killing one Israeli and wounding 13.



On February 3, 2016, three terrorist operatives from Qabatiya carried out a combined shooting and stabbing attack near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of east Jerusalem. A Border Policewoman was killed and another was critically wounded. The Fatah Twitter account posted support for the three terrorists from Qabatiya, reading "From Qabatiya to Jerusalem, blessings" (Twitter account of Fatah, February 3, 2016).



Encouragement for throwing stones: the notice on the Fatah information commission's website reads, "We struggle for independence with the stones of our land" (December 27, 2015).

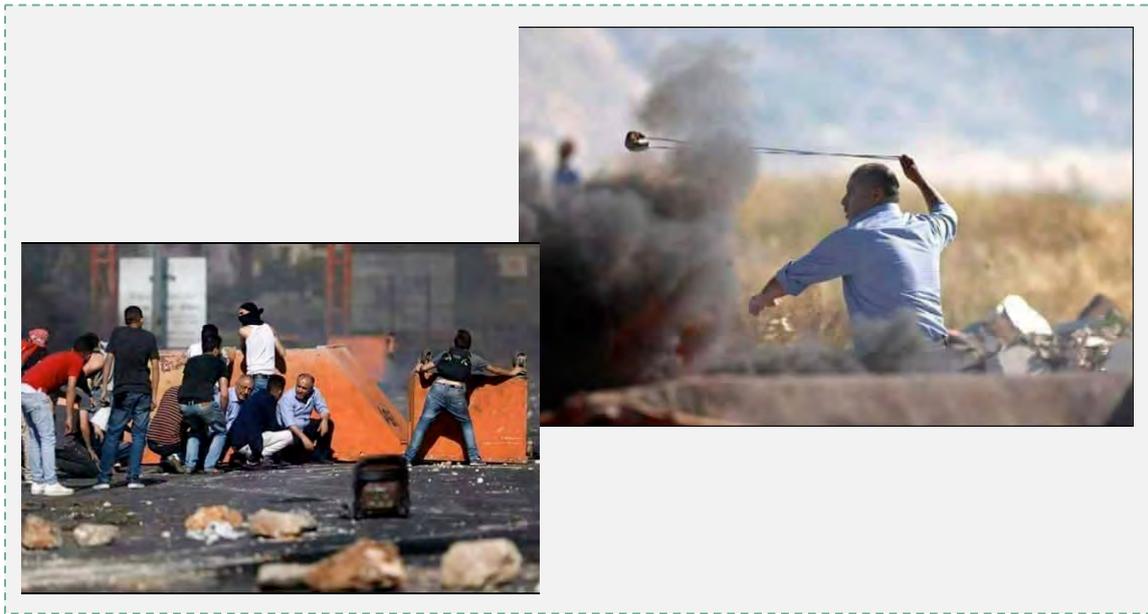
2) The Palestinian media, including the media affiliated with the PA, praise the terrorist attacks and those who carry them out, systematically claiming that Israel "executes" innocent Palestinians. The PA and Fatah customarily accuse Israel of responsibility for the deaths of terrorists who carry out attacks, completely ignoring the relationship between cause (terrorist attack) and effect (death of the Palestinian terrorist operative). The Palestinian media frequently serve as a

platform for the false claims of the terrorists' families (for example, calling a vehicular attack a "traffic accident").

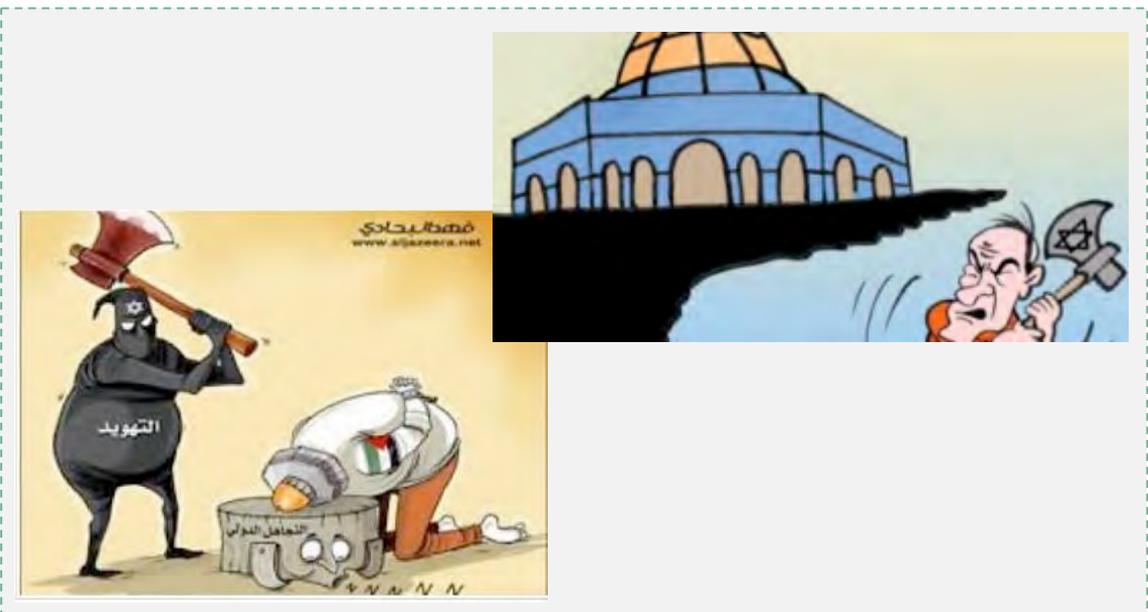


Official PA support for a deadly shooting attack: on October 9, 2016, Musbah Abu Sabih carried out a drive-by shooting attack in Jerusalem, killing two Israelis. Omar Abu al-Ghoul, who writes commentary for al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, the PA's official organ, wrote a column claiming that Israel's policies and security activities were what had "pushed" Musbah Abu Sabih to carry out the attack. Omar Abu al-Ghoul was certain that "it is the language that leads to a response to [the Israelis'] barbarity, corruption and terrorism." He called terrorist Abu Sabih the "lion of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa," saying he had died on the earth his beloved "capital of Jerusalem," leaving behind a will urging the Palestinians to defend Jerusalem and "preserve its Arab Palestinian identity" (al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, October 10, 2016).

3) Senior Fatah figures customarily give public praise to the "popular resistance," its violence and those who carry out terrorist attacks. Prominent among them are **Sultan Abu al-Einein** and **Jibril Rajoub**. Fatah activists sometimes participate in demonstrations and violent clashes with the IDF. After the outbreak of the wave of popular terrorism, the Fatah media joined Hamas and the Islamic Movement in Israel in warning Muslims that "al-Aqsa mosque was in danger."



Jamal Hawil, a Fatah member of the Palestinian Legislative Council from the Jenin district, slings stones at the Beit El roadblock near Ramallah (Facebook page of Jenin al-Hadth, May 14, 2017). Hamal Hawil was one of the commanders of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades during the second intifada. He was detained in 2002 and released in 2009. In 2006, while still in prison, he was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council by Fatah in the Jenin district (QudsN, July 25, 2013).



Left: Cartoon appearing on a Fatah website showing Israel decapitating Al-Aqsa mosque, while the international community disregards the event. The Arabic reads, "The Judaization [of Jerusalem]," and "International disregard" (fatehmedia website, September 19, 2015). Right: Cartoon claiming al-Aqsa mosque is in danger (website of Fatah's European office, September 17, 2015).



Left: Picture posted to the Facebook page of Sultan Abu al-Einein praising and glorifying the terrorist operatives who carried out attacks against Israelis, including Muhannad Halabi, who carried out a stabbing attack in Jerusalem, killing two Israelis (Facebook page of Sultan Abu al-Einein, October 4, 2015). Right: Sultan Abu al-Einein, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, who also serves as Mahmoud Abbas' advisor for NGOs, interviewed by the Iranian TV channel al-Alam on October 2, 2015. He said the attack at Itamar (Samaria) in which Naama and Eitam Henkin were killed was "the natural response to the crimes of the occupation" (YouTube, October 2, 2015).



Jibril Rajoub, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and chairman of the Palestinian soccer association, during an interview with Palestinian TV. He praised the attacks ("popular resistance" attacks), saying they were heroic actions and expressed respect for those who carried them out. He praised the recent attacks, which, he said, greatly embarrassed Israel. On the other hand, he said there was a "national consensus" about not carrying out suicide bombing attacks, which might have a negative effect on the Palestinian struggle (YouTube and the Facebook page of Jibril Rajoub, October 17 and 18, 2015).

B. Senior figures in the PA, Fatah and the Palestinian security forces participate in the funerals of terrorist operatives killed during popular

⁵ The Facebook posts of Jibril Rajoub was published at the height of the wave of Palestinian popular terrorism, which included vehicular, stabbing and shooting attacks, most of them carried out in Jerusalem.

terrorism attacks and visit their families. Some of the terrorists killed while carrying out attacks are given governmental military-style funerals (where the terrorist's body is carried on the shoulders of members of the security forces).



On January 31, 2016, a Palestinian terrorist named Amjad Jaser Sukari carried out a shooting attack at an IDF roadblock near Beit El, wounding three IDF soldiers. He was shot and killed. Sukari was a first sergeant in the PA police and was one of the bodyguards of the attorney general in Ramallah. A formal military-style funeral was held for him, during which his body was carried on the shoulders of Palestinian policemen. One of the mourners in the cortege was Mahmoud al-'Alul, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and responsible for the PA bureau of mobilization and organization in Judea and Samaria (Ma'an, February 1, 2016).



On December 4, 2015, Abd al-Rahman Wajia al-Barghouti was killed during a stabbing attack on an IDF soldier near the village of 'Aboud (near Ramallah). The PA held a formal military-style funeral for him.



Official PA ceremonies for the return of the bodies of Palestinian terrorists from Israel. Left: Mass funeral held in Hebron for terrorist operatives whose bodies were returned to the PA (Wafa, October 31, 2015). Right: Formal military-style PA reception for the bodies of five Palestinian terrorists. The ceremony was attended by the PA's national security forces (Wafa, October 30, 2015).

C. Financial support for imprisoned terrorists, released terrorists and the families of shaheeds: according to data provided by the Palestinian ministry of finance, in 2016 the sum paid was 1,152 million Israeli shekels (about \$325,423,728). That was 6.9% of the entire PA budget and 29.6% of the foreign aid received by the PA. The PA authorized the payments with a series of laws and governmental orders. In May 2014 the PA removed the payments from the ministry of prisoners affairs and transferred them to the PLO's commission for prisoners and detainees affairs. The objective was to mislead donor countries which complained their aid funds were being used to finance terrorism.⁶

D. The shaheed cult:

1) **The PA and Fatah foster a cult of shaheeds from all the terrorist organizations who were killed during the decades of Palestinian terrorism. The shaheeds become role models and objects of veneration for Palestinian society, especially the youth.**

⁶ From a study done by Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yossi Kuperwasser, "A prize for terrorism, PA payments to the Palestinian terrorists and their families," published by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2017 (Hebrew).



The glorification of shaheeds: activists belonging to the Shabiba, Fatah's student faction in Hebron University, name a street in Hebron for Farouq Sadr. He was killed while carrying out a stabbing attack in Beit Hadassah in Hebron on October 29, 2015 (website of al-Huriya radio, Hebron, December 1, 2015).



During a soccer game held in al-Ram on October 11, 2016, the Palestinian Hilal al-Quds team held a moment of silence lasting six minutes to honor the memory of Palestinian terrorist Musbah Abu Sabih (who killed an Israeli policeman and civilian in a drive-by shooting attack). The Arabic reads, "The Hilal al-Quds soccer terrorism mourns the death of the lion of al-Aqsa, the heroic shaheed Musbah Abu Sabih" (Facebook page of the Halal al-Aqsa soccer team, October 11, 2017).

2) One very clear example of how a terrorist was turned into a cult figure is **Dalal al-Mughrabi**, a Fatah terrorist operative who in 1998 participated in the Coastal Road Massacre in which 35 Israelis were killed and 71 were wounded, 12 of them children. **Since then she has become a national**

heroine and every year a memorial ceremony is held in her honor, attended by representatives of the PA and Fatah.⁷



Pictures posted by senior Fatah figure Abbas Zaki on his Facebook page. They were taken at an event commemorating the 39th anniversary of the death of Palestinian terrorist operative Dalal al-Mughrabi. Left: Abbas Zaki sits next to Layla Ghnam, governor of the Ramallah district. Right: Abbas Zaki delivers a speech (Facebook page of Abbas Zaki, March 12, 2017).



Left: Notice on Fatah's official Facebook page commemorates Dalal al-Mughrabi on the anniversary of the Coastal Road Massacre (Fatah's official Facebook page, March 10, 2015). Right: Layla Ghnam, Palestinian Authority governor of the Ramallah district, gives a speech at a memorial ceremony for Dalal al-Mughrabi (Facebook page of Layla Ghnam, March 11, 2017).

⁷ See the March 23, 2017 bulletin, "Glorifying shaheeds who carried out deadly terrorist attacks and turning them into role models: Dalal al-Mughrabi, a Fatah terrorist who participated in the 1978 Coastal Road Massacre, as a case study."

3) During the most recent wave of popular terrorism **there have been many manifestations of solidarity with the shaheeds and attacks (mainly stabbing attacks) carried out to avenge the deaths of shaheeds**. The media affiliated the PA **produce broadcasts and publish praise for shaheeds** killed during attacks.



On October 10, 2015, a Palestinian terrorist named Muhammad Sayid Muhammad Ali stabbed two Israeli policemen in an attack near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. He was shot and killed. Left: Death notice issued for "the death of the heroic shaheed" Muhammad Sayid Muhammad Ali by Fatah. The Fatah logo at the top is flanked by Mahmoud Abbas (left) and Yasser Arafat (right) (Fatah-affiliated Facebook page, October 10, 2015). Right: The terrorist is seen stabbing the policeman (Facebook page of QudsN, October 13, 2015).

Summary

12. Israel's demand that the PA end its incitement to violence and terrorism is legitimate and just, however it is minimal and **deals only with the symptom and not the root of the problem**. The core of the issue is **the PA (and Fatah) policy supporting and encouraging popular terrorism (the so-called "popular resistance")**. Popular terrorism creates continual friction and violence between Israel and the Palestinians making it difficult to restart the political process, and both sides pay the price in blood. It is doubtful whether the PA and Fatah will meet Israel's demand to put an end to terrorism and violence. However, Israel's determination to stop terrorism and violence **may fall on willing ears within the international community at a time of global attacks carried out by Islamist jihadist terrorism**.

Inciting Hatred

13. As incitement to terrorism and violence is a result of ideology and policy, **incitement to hatred is a function of the Palestinian ethos accompanying the Palestinian national movement, which has educated Palestinians for decades, including the current generation.** Its main components are the "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees to their houses in Israel, refusal to recognize the Jewish people as a nation, denial of the connections and ties between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, denial of the connections and ties between the Jewish people and the Temple Mount, and the demonization of Israel. All of the above contribute to a **culture of hatred for the State of Israel and the Jewish people, and contradict Mahmoud Abbas' claim that the Palestinians educate their children on a "culture of peace".**⁸



Demonization of Israel: Fatah cartoon accusing Israel and the United States of executing Palestinian children (website of the Fatah information commission, December 12, 2015).

⁸ **Mahmoud Abbas**, at a press conference at the White House, claimed, "**we educate our children, our descendants and our sons on a culture of peace.** We are working to have them live in security, freedom and peace like the other children in the world, among them, children in Israel" (Wafa, May 3, 2017).



Demonization of Israel: accusing Israel of inflaming the Sunni-Shi'ite conflict (website of the Fatah information commission, October 19, 2016).

14. **Palestinian textbooks** serve as an **important tool for inculcating the younger generation with the Palestinian ethos.**⁹ **To textbooks can be added informal education in schools.**¹⁰ The Palestinian media, both hard copy and digital, and **even more so the social networks**, foster the ethos and often **pour oil on the fire of hatred for Israel**. UNRWA, which runs schools in the refugee camps, is committed to using PA textbooks and thus educates the younger generation on an anti-Israel worldview. UNRWA's attempts to slightly moderate the contents of Palestinian textbooks are repeatedly undermined by Hamas and the PA ministry of education.¹¹

15. As a function of all of the above, **the current generation of Palestinians has grown up not only on hostility towards Israel but exposed to constant violence and friction with the Israeli security forces in Judea and Samaria** (at locations which serve as focal points for popular terrorism attacks). Thus it is no wonder that **young Palestinians, some of them school children, have been prominent in the recent wave of popular terrorism**, spontaneously carrying out attacks on their own.

⁹ Reports issued over the past ten years have repeatedly indicated that hostility toward Israel is ingrained in the Palestinian curriculum. The most recent report was issued by **IMPACT-se (Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education) of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem**, which dealt with a study of textbooks and curriculums to promote peace and tolerance through education. The study was carried out by **Dr. Eldad J. Pardo** from the Hebrew University and entitled **"Palestinian Elementary School Curriculum 2016-17: Radicalization and Revival of the PLO Program"** (April 2017).

¹⁰ The situation is worse in the Gaza Strip, where the educational system is controlled by Hamas. From kindergarten, the children undergo intense radical-Islamic, anti-Israel indoctrination. In the higher grades they also receive military training in preparation for their future membership in Hamas or other terrorist organizations.

¹¹ See the May 16, 2017 bulletin, "Hamas and the Palestinian Authority's ministry of education undermine UNRWA's intention to slightly moderate the curriculum used in its schools."

Beyond the personal reasons motivating each Palestinian who carries out an attack, I am of the opinion **the young people who become terrorists have been greatly influenced by the education they receive, both formal and informal.** From earliest childhood they are imbued with a narrative negating the right of the State of Israel to exist, and regard violence as the main component of Palestinian strategy.

In Conclusion

16. Israel's just demand to end the PA's incitement to hatred **relates to one of the symptoms of the deeply-rooted Palestinian ethos.** Making significant changes in the ethos requires **a drastic change in the perceptions of the Palestinian public and the emergence of a brave Palestinian leadership that will dare to swim against the current** (for example, waiving the so-called "right of return" or being willing to recognize the State of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people). That is a fundamental condition for the success of any political process between Israel and the Palestinians, which has to be based, first and foremost, on mutual recognition of two peoples in the land of Israel, the Jewish people and the Palestinian people.