



## Senior Hamas figure presents Hamas' concept of the arrangement as implemented after the most recent round of escalation.

December 4, 2018

### Overview

On December 3, 2018, during the most recent mini-flotilla and its accompanying demonstration in the northern Gaza Strip, **Fathi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau, was interviewed by al-Jazeera. In the interview he clarified Hamas' concept of the arrangement with Israel, as implemented after the latest round of escalation (November 12-13 2018). He related to Hamas' expectations from Israel and threatened to raise the level of violence at the "return marches" if Hamas' demands were not met.** His remark reflected Hamas' concept of **continuous violence** in the Gaza Strip during the "return marches." **The intensity of the violence will be regulated by Hamas from time to time according to the situation on the ground and how Israel meets Hamas' demands.**



**Fathi Hamad speaks at a demonstration that took place during the mini-flotilla (Facebook page of al-Jazeera Mubasher, December 3, 2018).**

► The following were the main points of the interview (al-Jazeera Mubasher, December 3, 2018).

- ◆ **Hamas' expectations from Israel:** Hamas expects Israel to **implement the understandings [Hamas claims] it agreed to during the most recent round of escalation:**
  - Increasing the fishing area to 12 miles off the coast of the Gaza Strip.
  - The entrance of salaries for officials and aid for the Gaza Strip [i.e., the funds and fuel from Qatar].

- Renewal of some of the projects in the Gaza Strip that need funding through the UN.
- Easing the shortage of currency in the Gaza Strip by bringing in banknotes.

◆  **Hamas threatens to raise the level of violence against Israel if its demands are not met:**

- **Israel is now being tested.** If during the "test" Israel meets its commitments fully, Hamas will also meet its commitments. If not, then Hamas will act accordingly.
- If Israel does not meet its commitment,  **the "return marches" will return to their previous format.** That means a return to  **the use of incendiary kites and balloons and the activities of the "night harassment group"** [which harasses IDF soldiers during the night]. Moreover, he said,  **there will be "new inventions" related to the winter.**

► The remarks by Fathi Hamad are consistent with those made by other Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) figures. In ITIC assessment, that means that as far  **as Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip are concerned, the "return marches" will continue and there will be no return to the status quo ante** (the situation on the ground between Operation Protective Edge and March 30, 2018).  **Thus there will be continuous on-going violence in the Gaza Strip triggered by the "return marches," whose intensity Hamas will regulate according to developments on the ground.**

The practical meaning of the concept is that if Hamas' demands are met, the violence will be implemented at a level "tolerable" for Israel, as it has been during the Friday marches after the latest round of escalation ended. However, if Hamas' demands are not met, or if complications develop in meeting them (for example, if the Palestinian Authority exerts pressure on Hamas)  **a controlled rise in the level of violence can be expected as a means of exerting pressure on Israel.** In ITIC assessment, while Hamas does not want to be drawn into an overall military confrontation with Israel,  **it has to take into consideration that raising the level of violence may lead to other rounds of escalation.**