



Anti-Israeli demonstration and rally held in central London to mark Nakba Day, with the participation of members of the Labour Party and the support of its leader, Jeremy Corbyn. Hamas expressed its appreciation to Corbyn for his support.

May 19, 2019

Overview

On May 11, 2019, a demonstration and rally were held in central London to mark the Palestinian Nakba Day. The events were organized by several anti-Israeli organizations operating in Britain, whose objective is to demonize Israel and promote the BDS campaign.

The Nakba Day events in London were attended by between 3,000 and 4,000 demonstrators. At the head of the demonstrators marched **Ahed Tamimi**, a young Palestinian woman from the village of Nabi Salih (near Ramallah), a serial provocateur who customarily clashes with IDF soldiers. Among the speakers was **Zaher Birawi**, a Hamas- and Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated operative who participates in organizing marches and flotillas to the Gaza Strip, and a member of the committee that prepared the return marches. Another speaker was **Husam Zomlot**, the Palestinian Authority (PA) representative in Britain. The demonstrators carried signs and chanted slogans calling for the [so-called] "right of return" of the Palestinians, which means, according to Palestinian perception, **the destruction of the nature of the State of Israel as a Jewish state.**



Right: March in central London (Husam Zomlot's Facebook page, May 12, 2019). Left: At the head of the march are Zaher Birawi, Husam Zomlot and Ahed Tamimi (Zaher Birawi's Facebook page, May 11, 2019).

► While the number of participants at the event was not large, the Nakba Day demonstration illustrated yet again that **Britain continues to serve as a prominent European center for the anti-Israeli activists and organizations, some affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim**

Brotherhood. They carry out **extensive anti-Israeli activities:** smearing Israel and spreading toxic propaganda against it (at the Nakba Day events demonstrators chanted "Israel is a terrorist state"); carrying out activities encouraging boycotts of Israel as part of the BDS campaign; initiatives to send flotillas and marches to the Gaza Strip; and promoting the Palestinian demand for the [so-called] "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees and their descendants to the State of Israel (as a way of changing the nature of the State of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people). Operatives like Zaher Birawi have also been involved in Hamas activities in the Gaza Strip, such as the return marches, which ignite violence and terrorism.

► At the Nakba Day events in London members of the Labour Party participated. **The demonstration was supported by anti-Israeli Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, who posted a message in support of Nakba Day demonstrators on his Facebook page.** The post condemned "the ongoing human rights abuses by Israeli forces, including the shooting of hundreds of unarmed Palestinian demonstrators in Gaza" (a biased and distorted description the situation in the Gaza Strip, where IDF soldiers use extreme caution in dealing with rioters who throw IEDs at them, attempt to cross into Israeli territory and repeatedly carry out provocative acts towards the State of Israel). In addition, the Palestinian Forum in Britain posted a picture showing Jeremy Corbyn holding **a sign used by participants in the Nakba Day events. It showed a key, the Palestinian symbol of the "right of return" which means the destruction of the State of Israel.**¹



Jeremy Corbyn uses his Facebook page to encourage Nakba Day participants (Times of Israel, May 11, 2019) (ITIC emphasis).

¹ That was illustrated by the "Free Palestine" signs carried by demonstrators whose chants made its meaning clear: "From the river to the sea Palestine will be free" (The Jewish Chronicle, May 16, 2019).




Right: The British Labour Party leader holds a sign used in the Nakba Day events. It shows a key, the symbol of the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinians (Palestinian Forum in Britain Facebook page, May 11, 2019). Left: Sign used by the participants in the Nakba Day events (Palestine Solidarity Campaign, May 2019).



British Labour Party Richard Burgon at the Nakba Day demonstration, holding a sign showing the Labour Party's support for Palestine (Richard Burgon's Facebook page, May 11, 2019). He said "Palestine has the right to exist but sadly that is a right that is increasingly threatened ... Palestinians should be able to live free from ever expanding settlements on stolen land" (Guardian, May 10, 2019).


Hamas thanks Jeremy Corbyn for his support

Jeremy Corbyn's support for the Nakba Day events was welcomed by Hamas, the terrorist organization that controls the Gaza Strip and is behind the terrorist attacks against Israel carried out from it. In an open letter to Corbyn issued by Hamas in the name of the "Palestinian National Factions" (i.e., the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip), his condemnation of IDF soldiers was quoted: he claimed "they shoot at unarmed Palestinians." Hamas also said that "peace cannot be achieved with the continued illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories" (a term which, for Hamas, means all the territory of the State of Israel). The full Hamas open letter is below.



The Islamic Resistance Movement
HAMAS - Palestine

حركة المقاومة الإسلامية
حماس - فلسطين



We have received with great respect and appreciation the solidarity message sent by the British Labor Party Leader, Jeremy Corbyn, to the participants in the mass rally that took place in central London last Saturday in commemoration of the 71st anniversary of Nakba.

In his message, Mr. Jeremy Corbyn condemned the Israeli occupation forces' shooting at unarmed Palestinian demonstrators in Gaza who were calling for their rights to be recognized. He stressed that peace cannot be achieved with the continued illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories.

This message expresses support and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights to freedom, independence and self-determination. It also condemns the ongoing occupation and its crimes against our people, and reflects an advanced moral and political position worthy of all praise and thanks.

We also salute Mr. Jeremy Corbyn for his principled position in rejecting the so-called Trump Plan for the Middle East or the "Deal of the Century" if it was based on erasing Palestinian rights, primarily the right to an independent state.

On this occasion we emphasize that no peace plan can succeed at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people, that the Palestinians will not allow this deal to pass, and that it will be doomed to failure.

We also call on the current British government to stop supporting the Israeli occupation state and to listen to the voice of wisdom and reason and adopt policies in support of the Palestinian legitimate rights that will lead to stability in this vitally important and highly turbulent region.

Palestinian National Factions

Gaza, Palestine

May 15, 2019

Hamas expresses its appreciation to Jeremy Corbyn

Appendix A

Anti-Israeli organizations in Britain that supported the Nakba Day events

Among the organizers of the Nakba Day events were several organizations in Britain that wage anti-Israeli campaigns, including activities to boycott Israel as part of the BDS campaign. Among the organizations are the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), the Friends of al-Aqsa (FOA) and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB).

Palestine Solidarity Campaign



The PSC logo

► **Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)** is an anti-Israeli organization established in Britain in 1982. **It leads the campaign in Britain to boycott Israel and is also active in disseminating anti-Israeli propaganda.** The organization holds protests against companies that import merchandise from Israel and against stores that sell Israeli products. It has a number of offices in London, as well as in Scotland and Wales. Its members are British non-Muslims, Muslims and Palestinians living in Britain. Some of its activists participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. Most of its activity is carried out by volunteers (the organization claims several thousand). It is headed by an executive committee of 20 members, plus two members representing the PSC's Trade Union Advisory Committee, who are elected at the Annual General Meeting by its members.



The PSC website homepage called for a boycott of the Eurovision song contest (PSC website homepage).

Friends of al-Aqsa (FOA)



FOA logo

► **Friends of al-Aqsa (FOA)** is an anti-Israeli organization established in 1997. It represents itself as an NGO whose objective is to defend the rights of the Palestinians and al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. According to its website and Facebook page it deals mainly with **calling for a boycott of Israeli merchandise**. For example, for Ramadan (which has already begun) it is currently holding a campaign to discourage purchasing dates grown in Israel for breaking the Ramadan fast.



Right: Call to participate in FOA activities. Left: Call to boycott Israeli dates (Friends of al-Aqsa website)

Muslim Association of Britain



MAB logo

► **The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB)** is an organization affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Britain. Its activists participate in anti-Israeli activities held in London. It was established by **Muhammad Sawalha, a Hamas operative** who fled to Britain (and headed the MAB from 1999 to 2007).² In 2007 there were internal disputes within the organization and Sawalha and several other leaders left it. **Zaher Birawi, an anti-Israeli operative in Britain who is affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood**, also was active in the MAB and held a senior position.

► For many years the MAB was the most active Muslim Brotherhood organization in Britain. It collaborated with radical British leftist groups, especially members of the young Muslim Brotherhood generation.



Sign held by MAB activists at a rally in London on September 28, 2001.

² For Muhammad Sawalha's Hamas activities, see the January 24, 2019 bulletin, "Muhammad Sawalha, senior Hamas operative living in London, continues participating in Hamas-supported political activities."

Appendix B

Prominent Palestinian figures participating in the Nakba Day events in London

Zaher Birawi

► **Zaher Birawi is a Palestinian who lives in Britain and is affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.** He has a long record of activity in pro-Palestinian and Islamist organizations in Britain. He is the coordinator of the International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza and organizes marches and flotillas to smear Israel and support the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip. **Zaher Birawi was also involved in the committee that prepares the return marches** in the Gaza Strip, which since their inception have generated violence accompanied by rounds of rocket fire. He also provided a stage for the planned return marches on the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated al-Hiwar TV channel, which broadcasts from London, and where he is head of programming (al-Hiwar TV Facebook page, March 9, 2018).



Zaher Birawi says goodbye to a participant from one of the flotillas held in 2018 (Facebook page of the Malaysian organization MyCare, May 21, 2018).³

► The day after the Nakba Day events in London Zaher Birawi posted a picture on his Facebook page showing him at an anti-Israeli demonstration standing next to Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the British Labour Party. To the best of the ITIC's knowledge, Jeremy Corbyn did not participate in the May 11, 2019 Nakba Day events. It is therefore possible that Zaher al-Birawi used an old picture to create the false impression that Jeremy Corbyn participated in the events (Zaher Birawi's Facebook page, May 12, 2019).

³ For further information, see the July 22, 2018 bulletin, "A 'flotilla' of three small boats has begun its voyage to the Gaza Strip, expected to arrive around the end of July 2018, having conducted a propaganda tour of several European ports."



From Zaher Birawi's Facebook page, May 12, 2019, the day after the Nakba Day rally in central London. At the center of the picture is anti-Israeli Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, in front of a sign condemning the [alleged] "Israeli war crimes in Gaza." Corbyn's message to the Nakba Day demonstrators is quoted. To the best of the ITIC's knowledge, Corbyn did not participate in a Nakba Day demonstration or rally, therefore the picture may be an old one. It may have been posted by Zaher al-Birawi to give the false impression that Jeremy Corbyn participated in the events (Zaher al-Birawi's Facebook page, May 12, 2019).

Ahed Tamimi

► Ahed Tamimi is a young Palestinian woman from the village of Nabi Salih, with a reputation as a serial provocateur who has clashed with IDF soldiers since she was a child, with the objective of demonizing Israel.⁴ She has become a kind of "propaganda poster girl" working to promote anti-Israeli Palestinian propaganda. Her father, Bassam Tamimi, was detained by the Israeli security forces many times. On December 15, 2017, she was photographed hitting and kicking IDF soldiers. On December 19, 2017, after attacking an IDF soldier, she was detained. **In March 2018 she was convicted of four counts of attacking an IDF officer and soldier, and of obstructing IDF forces. She was sentenced to eight months imprisonment and eight months on parole.** She was released on July 29, 2018. Ahed Tamimi marched at the front of the Nakba Day march in London and gave a speech at the rally that followed the march.

⁴ For further information, see the December 20, 2017 bulletin, "Ahed Tamimi, serial provocateur since childhood in the village of Nabi Saleh."



Right: Ahed Tamimi gives a speech at the rally. Left: Ahed Tamimi walks next to Husam Zomlot, PA representative in Britain, at the anti-Israeli rally in central London (Husam Zomlot's Facebook page, May 12, 2019).

Husam Zomlot

► **Husam Zomlot is the former PA representative in the United States and today represents the PA in Britain.** He was born in the Shabouri refugee camp in Rafah in 1973. He has a BA in economics and politics from Bir Zeit University, an MA in research and development and a PhD in political economy from London University. On March 8, 2017, he was appointed by Mahmoud Abbas to head the PA legation to the United States. The legation was closed on October 11, 2018, in accordance with an order from the American president. After the legation was closed Husam Zomlot was appointed by Mahmoud Abbas to serve as PA representative in Britain.



Right: Husam Zomlot swears loyalty to Mahmoud Abbas during his appointment as PA representative to the United States (Husam Zomlot's Facebook page, March 7, 2017) Left: Closing the PA office in Washington, DC (QudsN Facebook page, October 11, 2018).



Husam Zomlot, PA representative in Britain, gives a speech at the Nakba Day rally in central London (Husam Zomlot's Facebook page, May 12 and 14, 2019).