



World Jerusalem Day: again a platform for incitement, threats, and the defamation and demonizing of Israel and the United States

April 13, 2023

Overview

- ▶ World Jerusalem Day has been marked by the Arab-Muslim world every year on the last Friday of Ramadan since 1979, when it was invented by the Ayatollah Khomeini, leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Its stated purpose is to express the support of Iran and the Arab-Muslim world for the Palestinians and the "liberation" of Jerusalem. World Jerusalem Day events are held primarily in the Arab-Muslim countries but also sometimes in the West. They are exploited to defame and demonize Israel, call for its eradication and defy the United States. This year World Jerusalem Day was marked on April 14, 2023, with events and demonstrations.
- ▶ World Jerusalem Day events reflected the extreme tension in Jerusalem, especially on the Temple Mount, and the anti-Israeli incitement and provocation of the Palestinian terrorist organizations, led by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). They were held in the shadow of a series of major terrorist attacks carried out in Judea, Samaria and inside Israel, and rockets launched at Israel from the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria at the beginning of the Passover holiday.
- ▶ At several events speakers gave militant speeches threatening Israel. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, speaking via satellite to the main rally in Gaza City, expressed Iran's full support for the Palestinians, and claimed the protest demonstrations in Israel had weakened it regionally. Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, thanked Iran for supporting Palestinians and warned Israel against attacking women on the Temple Mount. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah warned Israel not to attack Lebanon.
- ▶ The main events were held in Iran, which included the annual burning of Israeli and American flags, accompanied by chants calling for their obliteration. Similar events were held in Shi'ite concentrations in Lebanon. In the Gaza Strip the main rally was held in Gaza City, and in Judea and Samaria a rally was held in the Jenin refugee camp. Events were also held in Yemen, Pakistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Turkey, South Africa, London and New York.

► Unlike previous years and despite the threats against Israel, the events were not exploited for a display of Iranian, Hezbollah or Palestinian terrorist organization military force and there were no parades of ballistic missiles or other weapons, as had been customary in Iran.

Jerusalem Day Events

Gaza Strip

► The main event in the Gaza Strip to mark World Jerusalem Day was held in the "Palestine" Stadium in Gaza City, with the theme "The West Bank, Shield of Jerusalem." It began with a broadcast speech given by Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, in Persian with a simultaneous Arabic translation. He praised the Palestinians who carried out terrorist attacks and confronted the Israeli security forces, and stated he saluted the "Palestinian resistance" [terrorism] and the operatives in the confrontation arenas of "Palestine," and the men, women and youths who had sacrificed their lives "defending Palestine and Jerusalem," and claimed the Gazans and "resistance" fighters in Judea, Samaria and all "Palestine" were heroes. He added that the world was currently witnessing the creation of a new order, where the forces of the "resistance front" were becoming stronger while the enemy fronts [Israel and the United States] were fading and retreating. The situation in Washington, compared with the past, showed the waning of American hegemony, and the situation in Israel was as bad as could be and the country was doomed. He added that Israel wanted to normalize relations with the Islamic countries for the sake of its security, and that normalization was a "stab In the back of the 'resistance' and 'Palestine' " and would not provide security for Israel or the governments that had normalized relations with it (Shehab, April 14, 2023).



Iranian president Raisi speaking to the World Jerusalem Day event in Gaza City (al-Mayadeen TV, April 14, 2023).



The World Jerusalem Day event in Gaza City (al-Mayadeen TV, April 14, 2023).

► Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, gave a speech claiming the "Jerusalem axis"¹ was ready to defend Jerusalem and al-Aqsa after most of the Arab and Islamic regimes had become derelict in their duty, adding that they were "calming the [Arab-Muslim] nation." He said the [Muslim] nation had gone a long way towards preparing the "Jerusalem axis" to realize Allah's promise.² He promised the residents of Jerusalem that the "resistance" leadership and the "Jerusalem axis" would support and protect them. The leadership, he claimed, monitored the preservation of the Temple Mount compound and the conduct of the "occupation forces" [Israel] against them, as recent events showed. **He warned against a repetition of the scenes of dragging women from al-Aqsa mosque and claimed that harm done to one fingernail or hair of any woman in al-Aqsa would lead to great bloodshed in the Middle East** (Shehab, April 14, 2023).

¹ The "resistance axis," i.e., Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

² Sinwar was referring to verse 7 of Qur'an Surah 17, "If you act rightly, it is for your own good, but if you do wrong, it is to your own loss. "And when the second warning would come to pass, your enemies would 'be left to' totally disgrace you and enter the Temple 'of Jerusalem' as they entered it the first time, and utterly destroy whatever would fall into their hands." Verses 4-8 read, "And We warned the Children of Israel in the Scripture, "You will certainly cause corruption in the land twice, and you will become extremely arrogant... When the first of the two warnings would come to pass, We would send against you some of Our servants of great might, who would ravage your homes. This would be a warning fulfilled... Then 'after your repentance' We would give you the upper hand over them and aid you with wealth and offspring, causing you to outnumber them...[verse 7]... Perhaps your Lord will have mercy on you 'if you repent', but if you return 'to sin', We will return 'to punishment'. And We have made Hell a 'permanent' confinement for the disbelievers." In his Qur'an exegesis Professor Uri Rubin said that the first time was the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC, and the second time was the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., but Islamic commentators, especially those affiliated with Hamas and the PIJ, tend to interpret the second time as the promise of the destruction of the State of Israel (from an article by (Res. Lt. Col.) Dr. Shaul Bartal, of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, on the Institute website). The Qur'an verse often appears in announcements and statements from Hamas and its leadership, especially Mahmoud al-Zahar, who since Operation Protective Edge has referred to the next round of combat as the one that will destroy Israel.

► Al-Sinwar praised the attendance of the Iranian president at the event in Gaza and expressed his esteem for his repeating Iran's commitment to support the "Palestinian resistance" by admitting that **the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip would not have reached the level it had attained without Iranian support.** He also expressed his esteem for the commitment of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to support "Palestine" and the holy sites. According to al-Sinwar, they were constructing the "Jerusalem axis" one level at a time, reconciling with Syria, which was a recruitment arena, and developing relations with Hezbollah, which was a very important part of the "al-Sham army."

► Regarding recent events in Jerusalem, al-Sinwar said that the entire world watched the "religious war" waged against al-Aqsa, Jerusalem and the West Bank. It was not, he claimed, only against Islam, but against Christianity as well. He said the "resistance's" response in Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon sent Israel an "electric shock," a message Israel understood as it had not understood the messages from mediators. He claimed that the Palestinian forces in the "resistance" and "Jerusalem axis" were working to defend Jerusalem, al-Aqsa mosque and their people, were aware of Israel's hidden agenda for after Ramadan and would be on guard.

► Al-Sinwar condemned what he called "the double standard of the global leadership". He claimed condemnations were insufficient, the leaders had to change their strategy, stop normalization, close their embassies and support the "Palestinian resistance." He also appealed to Jews around the world, exhorting them to oppose the conduct of the government of Israel, boycott it and force it to change its ways, otherwise, they would be influenced by the consequences of the "religious war" ignited by extremist settlers. **He warned against interference in the "nuclear explosion" called the Temple Mount and al-Aqsa mosque** (Hamas website, April 14, 2023).



Yahya al-Sinwar at the event in Gaza (Hamas website, April 14, 2023).



Yahya al-Sinwar and the leadership of the PIJ and other terrorist organizations (Twitter account of the Alam24 website, directed by photojournalist Hassan Aslih, April 14, 2023).

► After the Friday prayer the national and Islamic forces in the Gaza Strip held a mass march from the al-Am'ari mosque in Gaza City to "Palestine" Square in the city center. Marchers waved Palestinian flags and flags of Arab-Muslim states supporting the Palestinian issue. Liwai al-Qariouisi, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, gave a speech on behalf of the organization, claiming the "resistance" had rewritten the rules of confrontation with Israel according to the "equation of unity of the fronts." He said the time of Israel's "aggression and repeated invasions" of al-Aqsa mosque had ended, adding that the rockets launched a few days previously from south Lebanon, Syria and the Gaza Strip, as well as the "heroic actions" [terrorist attacks] which had shaken Israel, "proved" the unity and mutual relations of the fronts against Israel (Shehab, April 14, 2023).



March in the Gaza Strip (Alam24 website Twitter account, April 14, 2023).

Judea and Samaria

► On April 13, 2023, the Jenin Battalion of the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, held a military display in the Jenin refugee camp with the participation of dozens of Battalion operatives. Armed and masked, they marched through the streets and alleys of the refugee camp and waved pictures of al-Aqsa mosque, shaheeds and the organization

leadership, led by Ziyad al-Nakhlah (Daffa_media Telegram channel [the PIJ Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria], April 13, 2023).



The Jenin Battalion's military display (Right: Shams News Twitter account. Left: The Jenin Battalion's alternative Telegram channel, April 13, 2023).

Iran

► Mass marches were held in Tehran and other Iranian cities where Palestinian flags were waved. Israeli and American flags and effigies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and American President Joe Biden were burned (Mehr News Agency, April 14, 2023). On the sidelines of the World Jerusalem Day march, Ebrahim Raisi, president of Iran, said the day reflected the solidarity of the Muslim states, and claimed the expressions of support from around the globe "proved" to the Palestinian and Lebanese people, as well as to the "resistance fighters" [terrorist operatives], that they were not alone. He also claimed that the normalization Israel was attempting to construct with regional states would not contribute to its security because the country itself was on the brink of collapse and signs of its downfall were evident (Mehr News Agency, April 14, 2023).



Iranian president Raisa and Esmail Ghaani, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force, at the World Jerusalem Day march in Tehran (IRNA, April 14, 2023).



Huge picture erected in Tehran's Revolution Squad for World Jerusalem Day. The Arabic reads, "In fewer than 17 years we will be in Jerusalem" (Mehr News Agency, April 14, 2023).



Burning the Israeli flag in Tehran (Mehr News Agency in English, April 14, 2023).



Right: Burning the Israeli flag in Tehran (Mehr News Agency in English, April 14, 2023). Left: Burning the American flag (Mehr News Agency in Persian, April 14, 2023).



Right: Walking on the American flag (Mehr News Agency in English, April 14, 2023). Left: Man disguised as Prime Minister Netanyahu bound and handcuffed (ISNA News Agency in English, April 15, 2023).

Lebanon

► Hezbollah held its main event in Beirut with the participation of the organization leadership and hundreds of terrorist operatives. Signs were waved in Arabic and Hebrew calling for the destruction of Israel. Hezbollah leadership Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech in which he said the solidarity of the World Jerusalem Day sent the "enemy" [Israel] a message which terrified it. As to the situation in Israel, he claimed the deep division within the country exposed the sectarian and religious fissures which, along with the judicial changes, were liable to lead to bloodshed. He also warned that some of Israel's responses or "foolish actions" in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon or Syria could drag the entire Middle East into war. Regarding the events of the preceding week in south Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, he said Hezbollah's silence was an aspect of its [psychological] war against Israel. However, he said, Hezbollah would respond as needed to any attack on Lebanon (al-Nur Radio, April 14, 2023).



Right: The main Hezbollah event in Beirut. Left: Nasrallah delivers the keynote address at the event (al-'Ahad website, April 14, 2023).

► Hezbollah and the Lebanese Resistance Battalions³ held a event near the Israeli-Lebanese border in the eastern sector of south Lebanon, the region of the Shaba Farms and the village of Shuba (al-'Ahad website, April 15, 2023).



The event at the Israeli border (al-'Ahad website, April 15, 2023).

► The Lebanese Resistance Battalions also simulated the takeover of an IDF post near the village of Marwahin, across from the IDF post at Zarit, with the slogan, "[We're] coming." The exercise was viewed by a Hezbollah member of the Lebanese parliament (al-'Ahad website, April 17, 2023).



Simulated attack of "IDF post" near Marwahin in south Lebanon (al-'Ahad website, April 17, 2023).

Iraq

► Marches were held in Baghdad and other cities. Ali Abu Shahin, a member of the PIJ's political bureau, participated in the event held in Najaf (alqudsnews website, April 15, 2023).

³ Established by Hezbollah; its operatives do not belong to the Shi'ite sect in Lebanon but are Christians, Sunnis and Druze whose common denominator is the desire to fight Israel. Hezbollah has trained the Battalions since their inception and provides them with equipment and a budget. The main force is located in Sidon.



The marches in Baghdad (Right: al-Manan TV website, April 14, 2023. Left: al-Ghadir TV website, Iraq, April 14, 2023).



Right: The event in al-Nasiriyah (Nasiriyah News, April 14, 2023). Left: Ali Abu Shahin, a member of the PIJ's political bureau, in Najaf (alqudsnews website, April 15, 2023).

► **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah**, visiting Iraq at the time, gave a speech at the event in Baghdad. He claimed the Palestinians would continue fighting, even for a thousand years, until they liberated "Palestine" and Jerusalem from the "Zionist project." He added that the Palestinians were certain of victory, and that caused "an earthquake in Zionist perception" and [allegedly] forced Israel "to admit they were in the wrong place" [sic], which was the first step towards their expulsion from "Palestine." He said the world had to understand that the first condition for peace was to dismantle "the cursed settlement called Israel established by the West on Palestinian land." He also said the following (YouTube popular mobilization channel of the umbrella organization for the pro-Iranian Shi'ite militias in Iraq, April 14, 2023):

- ◆ Jerusalem was the title of their identity, religion and history, and therefore it was necessary to wage jihad and fight to "liberate" it from Israel. The Jews' "daily desecration" of al-Aqsa mosque had to be opposed as forcefully as possible, and that had to motivate the Islamic nation to act on every level.
- ◆ The unity of the Muslim nation was the foundation for victory in battling the enemy, and had to be strengthened.

- ◆ The unity of the Arab and Islamic forces of "resistance" in confronting the "Zionist project," and their cooperation and mutual integration were an important aspect of support for the Palestinians and overcoming the "Zionist project."



Al-Nakhalah at the event in Baghdad (Right: Paltoday, April 14, 2023. Left: YouTube channel of the popular mobilization, April 14, 2023).

Syria

- The Palestinian organizations in the Yarmouk refugee camp marked World Jerusalem Day for the first time since 2012, when the battles in the refugee camp began. The day was marked with a military display attended by leaders of the Palestinian organizations in Syria, among them Isma'il al-Sindawi (Abu Mujahed), the PIJ representative in Syria; representatives from Iran, and Hassan Haballah, a member of Hezbollah's Shura Council (Sputnik in Arabic, April 14, 2023).



The event in the Yarmouk refugee camp (Right: SANA, April 13, 2023. Left: Shams News, April 13, 2023).

- A Palestinian network called the al-Quds Battalion⁴ held a march in the Neirab refugee camp in Aleppo (Sputnik in Arabic, April 14, 2023).

⁴ The al-Quds Battalion is a Palestinian military force operated by the Assad regime as a Syrian army auxiliary force. It was established in October 2013 and has several thousand operatives. During the Syrian Civil War the Assad regime employed them against the rebel organizations in various arenas for both offensive and defensive missions where they gained combat experience, especially in urban



The event in the Neirab refugee camp in Aleppo (SANA, April 14, 2023).

Yemen

► Mass marches were held in the cities and districts controlled by the Houthi Shi'ite rebels. In Sanaa marchers waved signs with pictures of the Houthi leader and Qassem Soleimani, as well as signs calling for the boycott of American and Israeli merchandise and signs with the Houthi slogan, "Death to America, death to Israel, bitterness for the Jews, victory for Islam" (September 21 website, Yemen, April 15, 2023).



The march in Sanaa (September 21 website, Yemen, April 15, 2023).

warfare. Apparently they are the best-trained of the forces and of the other Palestinian militias operated by the Syrian regime. They may receive financial and logistic support from the IRGC Qods Force. For further information see the March 19, 2018 report, "Armed Palestinian forces, militias and organizations handled by the Syrian regime in the Syrian civil war."



The march in Sanaa. Right: Pictures of the Houthi leader and Qasem Soleimani. Left: Signs calling for the boycott of American and Israeli merchandise (September 21 website, Yemen, April 15, 2023).



The march in Taiz (al-Sumud website, Yemen, April 15, 2023). Left: Locations in the Huja district where World Jerusalem Day was marked (website of the al-Masira network, the Houthi media information branch, April 14, 2023).

Bahrain

► Several marches were held where participants held pictures of Sheikh Ali Suliman, secretary general of the al-Wafaq movement, Bahrain's Shi'ite opposition party (website of the al-Masira network, April 14, 2023).



The march in Bahrain (website of the al-Masira network, April 14, 2023).

Turkey

- Marches were held in several cities, including Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Participants reportedly burned Israeli flags (taghribnews agency in Arabic, April 15, 2023).



Right: One of the marches (taghribnews agency in Arabic, April 15, 2023). Left: Event held in Izmir (Ahlulbait agency in Arabic, April 16 2023).

Pakistan

- Marches were held to mark World Jerusalem Day (IRNA in Arabic, April 14, 2023).



Marches in Pakistan (Right: IRNA in Arabic, April 14, 2023. Left: kuwait24 website, April 16, 2023).

London and New York

- In **London** thousands of people marched on April 16, 2023 (IRNA in Arabic, April 17, 2023). In **New York City** hundreds of Muslims and ultra-Orthodox Naturei Karta anti-Zionist, anti-Israel Jews participated in an event held in Times Square on April 14, 2023 (IRNA in Arabic, April 15, 2023).



Right: The march in London (IRNA in Arabic, April 17, 2023). Left: The event in New York City (IRNA in Arabic, April 15, 2023).

South Africa

► A demonstration was held in front of the Israeli embassy in the capital city of Pretoria. Palestinian and Hezbollah flags were waved and people held pictures of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Hassan Nasrallah and Qassem Soleimani. Marches were also held in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg (IRNA in Arabic, April 15, 2023).



Events in South Africa (Radio Tehran in Arabic website, April 15, 2023).

► World Jerusalem Day marches were held in other countries in Africa, including Madagascar and states in Nigeria.



Right: Event in the city of Katsina, Nigeria. Left: Event in the city of Saminaka (Ahlulbayt agency in Arabic, April 17, 2023).