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Hamas religious scholars: 'Spill the blood of Israeli soldiers and settlers'

October 26, 2023 *ynetnews.com* reported: "Officials in the Religious Scholars Association of Palestine in Gaza issued a decree calling for the killing of Israeli soldiers and 'settlers,' inside and outside the Gaza Strip.

The association is the central governing body that is affiliated with Hamas and functions from inside the enclave. They are charged with publishing religious and moral guidelines, including those issued to the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military arm of Hamas. Since the war's second day, on October 8, while skirmishes and firefights were still raging inside Israeli territory, the decree called for the taking of lives.

Signed on behalf of 'The Islamic nation's religious scholars', it read: 'Religious scholars make it unequivocally clear that any soldier and Zionist settler are to be killed, wherever they are found in all Muslim lands, both within and outside of Palestine.'

Association senior official, Saleh al-Raqab, published an article on October 8 called 'Oh Jihad warriors in Palestine', in which he wrote: 'Allah, grant victory to Jihad warriors in Palestine, guide their strikes and gunfire upon the Jews' throats, stabilize the warriors' legs and bring forth their stabbing blades into their hearts'..."

Israel Gaza: EU leaders set to discuss humanitarian pauses

October 26, 2023 *bbc.com* reported: "EU leaders are meeting in Brussels at a summit overshadowed by Hamas's war with Israel and the EU's failure to project a united front.

For weeks, the European Union's stance on the war has been clouded with mixed messages, diplomatic gaffes and conflicting national views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But after days of disagreement, EU leaders aim to reach a common position. At issue is whether to back a ceasefire or humanitarian pauses in the fighting.

European Council President Charles Michel says the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza is of grave concern and the leaders are keen to facilitate access to food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter.

They hope that will create safer conditions for the release of more than 200 hostages seized by Hamas gunmen during their 7 October attack. Many of those held captive are European dual nationals, including citizens from Germany, France, Portugal and the Netherlands.

EU member states hold sharply differing views and it all makes for a very confusing picture. Arriving for the summit, Spain's caretaker Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said he would like to see a ceasefire: "But if we don't have that condition, at least a humanitarian pause in order to channel all the humanitarian aid that the Palestinian population needs urgently."



Handwritten note found on Hamas terrorist calls for beheading, removing hearts and livers

October 25, 2023 *jpost.com* reported: "A handwritten note discovered on the body of a Hamas terrorist encouraged the fighters to carry out a merciless massacre, including decapitation and dismemberment of the victims' bodies.

The note, announced by IDF Spokesperson R.-Adm. Daniel Hagari in an interview with American television network CBS, contains words of encouragement from the Hamas leadership declaring the religious importance of killing Jews, and imparts inspiration from historical Muslim leaders who massacred men, sold women and children into slavery, and looted cities. The terrorists are encouraged to decapitate heads and remove the hearts and livers of their victims.

'You must sharpen the blades of your swords and be pure in your intentions before Allah. Know that the enemy is a disease that has no cure, except beheading and removing the hearts and livers. Attack them!' the note reads..."

Hamas Fighters Trained in Iran Before Oct. 7 Attacks

October 25, 2023 *wsj.com* reported: "In the weeks leading up to Hamas's Oct. 7 attacks on Israel, hundreds of the Palestinian Islamist militant group's fighters received specialized combat training in Iran, according to people familiar with intelligence related to the assault.

Roughly 500 militants from Hamas and an allied group, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, participated in the exercises in September, which were led by officers of the Quds Force, the foreign-operations arm of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps, the people said. Senior Palestinian officials and Iranian Brig. Gen. Esmail Qaani, the head of Quds Force, also attended, they said.

More than 1,400 people, mostly civilians, were killed Oct. 7 by Hamas fighters who poured across the border from the Gaza Strip. Scores of others were kidnapped and taken back to Gaza, where they are being held hostage..."

China, US Differ on Response to Widening Middle East Violence

October 24, 2023 [voanews.com](https://www.voanews.com) reported: "China will continue to support 'all efforts conducive to promoting dialogue' for the two-state solution amid the escalating conflict in the Middle East, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

In the regular foreign ministry press briefing on Oct. 23, spokesperson Mao Ning, said, 'As we speak, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is escalating, the situation in Gaza is very grave and armed conflict is spreading with a growing spillover effect.'

'All parties should abide by the international law and international humanitarian law, protect civilians and do everything possible to avert an even worse humanitarian disaster,' she said. She added that humanitarian needs must be met.

'China will continue to support all efforts conducive to promoting dialogue and restoring peace and do its part ... for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question.'

Her remarks highlighted the difference between Washington and Beijing on the Israel-Hamas war, which analysts worry will further fuel tensions between the two superpowers. President Joe Biden told Americans on Oct. 19 in a televised live speech that the U.S. must increase its support for Ukraine and Israel..."

Statement From Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Steps to Increase Force Posture

October 21, 2023 [defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov) reported: "Following detailed discussions with President Biden on recent escalations by Iran and its proxy forces across the Middle East Region, today I directed a series of additional steps to further strengthen the Department of Defense posture in the region. These steps will bolster regional deterrence efforts, increase force protection for U.S. forces in the region, and assist in the defense of Israel.

First, I redirected the movement of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group to the Central Command area of responsibility. This carrier strike group is in addition to the USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group, which is currently operating in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. It will further increase our force posture and strengthen our capabilities and ability to respond to a range of contingencies.

I have also activated the deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery as well as additional Patriot battalions to locations throughout the region to increase force protection for U.S. forces.

Finally, I have placed an additional number of forces on prepare to deploy orders as part of prudent contingency planning, to increase their readiness and ability to quickly respond as required. I will continue to assess our force posture requirements in the region and consider deploying additional capabilities as necessary."

China deploys six warships to Middle East over fears Israel crisis could spark WW3

October 21, 2023 [the-express.com](https://www.the-express.com) reported: "China has deployed six warships to the Middle East as the conflict between Israel and Hamas escalates, according to reports. The 44th naval escort task force - from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theatre - has been involved in routine operations in the region and spent several days in Oman last week.

The Chinese warships left Muscat for an unspecified location on Saturday after participating in an exercise with the Omani navy. The task force includes the Zibo, a guided missile destroyer, the frigate Jingzhou, and the supply ship Qiandaohu - all of which will be stationed in the Middle East as Israel prepares for a ground invasion of Gaza.



During the visit to Oman, Chinese commanders met with Omani military officials and visited military institutions, while sailors from both countries toured shops and even organized a basketball game, according to a state news agency. Since arriving in the Gulf of Aden north of Somalia six months ago, the PLA task force has been involved in escort missions for shipping. However, it handed over its mission to the 45th task force - from the PLA's Northern Theatre command - earlier this month.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping said on Thursday that a two-state solution to establish an independent Palestine is the "fundamental way out" of the Israel-Hamas war..."