

MEMMO

Oct. 27, 2011

Palestinians Glorify Released Terrorists

Both the terrorist organization Hamas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) are honoring—with prestige, cash and luxury hotel stays—the Palestinian terrorists recently released by Israel to free abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Hamas now threatens to kidnap more Israeli soldiers. Rather than exalting murderers, Palestinian leaders should distance themselves from terrorists and get back to the negotiating table with Israel.

The PA has joined the terrorist group Hamas in embracing released terrorists, including those convicted of murdering Israelis.

- In a symbolic display of unity, PA President Mahmoud Abbas appeared with senior Hamas official Hassan Youssef during a ceremony in Ramallah to welcome the released prisoners who were convicted of carrying out and participating in terrorist attacks. An estimated 200,000 Palestinians attended the event.
- Abbas praised the convicted terrorists and their contribution to the Palestinian cause. “You are freedom fighters and holy warriors for the sake of God and the homeland,” Abbas told the prisoners, *Haaretz* reported. He added: “Your cause was and is still in our heart and minds. We see some of you out, and the rest will follow soon if God wills.”
- Abbas, who hosted nearly 100 released terrorists for a reception at his Ramallah headquarters, also called for the release of Marwan Barghouti, who received five life sentences for murder, and Ahmad Sa’adat, who planned the 2001 murder of Israeli Cabinet Minister Rehavam Ze’evi.
- Abbas said the efforts of those released from Israeli jails advance the PA’s ultimate goal of Palestinian statehood, Reuters reported. “You will see the results of your struggle in the independent state with its capital Jerusalem,” he said.
- *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the PA will give each released Palestinian a financial grant. Hamas announced previously that it plans to give each released terrorist a grant of \$2,000.
- In Gaza, Hamas is even paying for some of the released terrorists to stay in a luxury hotel on the Mediterranean.



Thousands of Palestinians in Gaza celebrated the release of Palestinian prisoners, including many convicted of murdering Israeli civilians.

Hamas is already threatening to kidnap more Israelis.

- Hamas violated international law by holding Shalit for more than five years without any visits by the Red Cross or contact with his family.

- Now, Hamas is looking to kidnap more soldiers. *Ha'aretz* reported that leading Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari stated, "Those same operations will continue as long as there are Palestinian prisoners in jail in Israel."
- Abu Obaida, a spokesman for Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the armed wing of Hamas, said Shalit "will not be the last soldier kidnapped by Hamas as long as Israel keeps Palestinian prisoners detained."

The released terrorists have received overwhelming support from the Palestinian population. Some have called for attacking Israel.

- Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians rallied in Ramallah and Gaza to celebrate the release of Palestinians convicted of carrying out some of the worst terrorist attacks in Israel's history.
- Some of the released terrorists urged other Palestinians to continue violence against Israel. Wafa al-Biss, a failed suicide bomber freed by Israel, told dozens of children who came to visit her that she hoped "you will walk the same path we took and God willing, we will see some of you as martyrs," Reuters reported. She added: "Arrests will not deter us from our strong battles and confrontation in the face of Zionist arrogance in the land of Palestine."
- Reuters reported that after al-Biss spoke, the children cheered and waved Palestinian flags and chanted: "We will give souls and blood to redeem the prisoners. We will give souls and blood for you, Palestine."
- Yehya Al-Sinwar, a Hamas official who spent 23 years in prison in Israel, urged "the leaders of all the resistance's factions and the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades to take it upon themselves and free all of the prisoners soon," according to YNet.

The PA's reverence for terrorists raises serious doubts about its commitment to peace.

- The PA's praise for terrorists and its continued refusal to negotiate with Israel raises questions about whether it has any intention of negotiating peace with Israel.
- The PA should condemn terrorism, end incitement and reject Hamas' calls to kidnap more Israeli soldiers as bargaining chips.
- The PA should accept repeated calls by the United States and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to enter direct negotiations with Israel.