

Hamas New Document: Critical Review

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Abstract: This article includes discussion that highlighted the possibility of considering Hrakat Al-Moqawamah Al- Islamia (Hamas) new document as an exit path from isolation and boycotting. The aim for the article was to examine the impact of this document on the internal and the external political arena. It is also, to examine its impact extents regarding the seeking of Hamas to achieve legitimacy and acceptance as a political actor in both internal and external political arenas. The article portrays the obstacles that still exist preventing Hamas from achieving recognition as a legitimate political actor despite the adopted changes. Moreover, indicates the need for changes that Hamas should adopt. The paper had shown that Hamas should continue its steps toward making real change. It had stressed that suspicion and mistrust were the main factors for Hama's failures. So, it should demonstrate clear good will supported by practice on the ground. Hesitation and contradicting positions had led for creating obstacles for Hamas. The article highlights the need for Hamas courage to get rid of the ideological factors and to be more close to reality.

Keywords: changes, document, Hamas, new, Palestinians, positions.

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I. CHANGES IN HAMAS NEW DOCUMENT

The first of May 2017 was an important day for Hamas, for the Palestinian political arena, the region and the entire world. Several political actors, be they friends or enemies to Hamas, have long been waiting for the declaration of Hamas new document from Doha, the capital of Qatar. All were keen to know the new positions that Hamas adopted in its new document, especially the previous declared positions by its leaders in different occasions. For instance, the interview of Khaled Mishaal with an Indian media outlet had included several ancient issues and positions that contradict the charter and the new document adopted. In the declaration of the new document, he accepted two state solution and indicated the fighting is against the occupation not race or religion.¹ This new document awarded clear documentation for Hamas new position and principles which at least brushed aside the old charter.

Hamas charter published on 18th August 1988 included 36 articles,² per contra, the new Hamas Document of General Principles and Polices includes 42 articles.³ The difference in the number of articles is part of several differences in particular within the controls and the core of Hamas positions. The new document refrained from using Islamic terminology which dominated the old charter. The terms like Muslim woman had been changed to Palestinian woman, the religious conflict to Arab Zionism conflict, the Islamic society to Palestinian society, Palestine was considered an Islamic *Waqf* land in the charter, it has now become the land of the Palestinian people and the term Jihad has been replaced by resistance.

The most significant change was Hamas disintegration from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement by indicating its nationality as a Palestinian national movement. Hamas stressed that it is not linked to any regional or international Islamic organization and that it adopts a policy of avoiding intervention in other countries' issues. Further, it ruled out extremism and terror which contradict moderate Islam as the conviction and belief of Hamas. Its main aim is to liberate the home land from the occupation. So, Hamas struggle against the Zionist movement shall not be perceived as a struggle against the Jews as a religious community.

Hamas has accepted the creation of the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of the 4th of June 1967. More significantly, the new document identifies the Palestinian citizens in Article 4 as the Arab inhabitants who lived in Palestine before 1947. This means that the Jews settlers before that date could be considered as Palestinians because the Arab Palestinians includes all religions such as Judaism, Christianity and

¹ Mashal, Khalid, interview, July 26, 2017, in DNA (Daly News & Analysis): <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-we-are-a-national-resistance-movement-not-a-terrorist-organisation-khalid-mashal-2238099>

² Karsh, Efraim (Editor), *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israel Security*, First Edition, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd 1996, pp 273-292.

³ Hamas Document of General Principles and Polices: <http://hamas.ps/en/post/678/>

Islam. In addition, the new document explained that the military resistance is not the only method for liberation as mentioned in the previous charter. Moreover, for the first time, it has accepted the PLO as the national organisation representing the Palestinian people inside Palestine and in the diaspora. Democracy, pluralism, national partnership, acceptance of the other and resolving disputes through dialogue are secular concepts that Hamas clearly adopted within its new document.

Those are the main elements of change that Hamas has adopted through its new document of General Principles and Policies. The new principles are in essence several messages for different political actors, Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the internal arena, the regional actors including the moderate countries especially for Egypt as well as for Israel and for the international actors, the Western Countries, Europe and USA and the International organizations.

II. HAMAS BETWEEN REALITY AND IDEALISM

The new document reflects that Hamas, at least outwardly, seeks to preserve its Islamic character an essential factor that determines its theoretical policy. The preamble of the new document and several articles from 7 to 11 highlight this consideration. This determination has influenced Hamas practical diplomacy on different spheres. Internally, Hamas did not distinguish between the goals it seeks to achieve. It mixed between the ideological and practical goals. In this context, several subjects could emerge including Hamas government role regarding ruling the existing situation or practicing and protecting resistance, the position toward the existence of other political actors, as well as the future seeking for. Externally, Hamas did not take into consideration its ability and preparation to address the demands of regional and the international political actors. In other words, Hamas is not yet able to distinguish between the needs, the requirement and the necessity for practical diplomacy and the ideological concepts.⁴

Under the existing circumstances, Fatah and Hamas, the two major organizations in the Palestinian political arena, failed in facing the reality dilemmas internally and externally. They both did not succeed in solving the issue of participation with others; each of them had sought for gaining power without sharing it with others. The partnership did not emerge from a pure internal will and consequently, both parties were not ready for this choice. The external political actors, given the aforementioned reasons, were not ready to accept Hamas participation because Hamas was considered as a terrorist organisation which refused to recognize the existing political situation. More importantly, both had mixed between authority under certain agreements and the need for strong resistance. Yasser Arafat had lost his life as a result of adopting resistance through encouraging Fatah militant brigades in indirect way through the Second Intifada. Also, he supported Hamas and gave it the green light to escalate their resistance against Israel. On the other hand, Hamas had faced boycott from the world and military actions from the Israeli government. Moreover, externally both of them suffered from pressure to accept several demands imposed by the international community.⁵ To add, President Mahmoud Abbas rejected the Quartet idea to ask Hamas to be disarmed as a precondition for participating in the election. His aim was to achieve full Palestinian legitimacy for the election because such conditions could be considered as an act to exclude Hamas. Avoiding the adoption of such condition led to imposing boycotting the results of the elections and causing difficult situation in the Palestinian arena.⁶

Hamas' new document did not offer satisfactory solutions for the dilemmas mentioned above. It clearly led to paradoxes that caused the continuation of the suspicions regarding Hamas new orientations, its will and its goals. The new document disregarded extreme religious concepts included in the former charter. Hamas has also broken its organizational links to the mother movement, the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, particularly in Egypt. The new document emerged as a result of the regional influence especially from Qatar and Turkey, as well as the international demands. Briefly, this change had emerged under the guise of political Islam and as a sort of protection to Hamas to show that it is different from the extreme Islamic Salafist organisations.⁷

However, Hamas new positions still contain several paradoxes in various directions which caused confusion and suspicion regarding its new orientations. Despite the new position that could be translated as a recognition for PLO position, Hamas still ignores the historical role and experience for all the Palestinian organisations through the struggle against the Israeli occupation. Until now, Hamas did not admit that the Palestinian independence was influenced by the external arena especially for the Arab world. This means that this new document was adopted as a result of this influence. This means that the new document is only a reproduction of the PLO experience in the early 1973 and 1974 when PLO tried to break the American position. This aim did not achieve the goal until PLO accepted UN Security Council resolution 242, and declaring its

⁴Giacaman, George, *Before and After Arafat: The Political Transition through the Second Intifada*, Muwatin Institute- Ramallah 2011, pp 191- 196.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp 174- 179.

⁶ Rice, Condoleezza, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of my Years in Washington*, First Edition, London 2011, pp 415- 420.

Notice more: <https://nn.ps/news/rby-wdwlly/2017/05/12/22848/>

⁷<http://www.alhayat.com/m/opinion/21710149>

National Convention as null and void (Caduc). Hamas did not reach this level which the PLO achieved in 1970s. Hamas new position emerged when the Arab situation was in retreat (recede), especially when instability is permeating the Arab countries. On the other hand, the PLO new positions through the 1970s and after that in 1988 were adopted when the Arabs and the Palestinians in general were in better situation, victory in 1973 and the First Intifada 1987.⁸

Article 20 of Hamas' new document contained unbelievable combination notwithstanding the explanation of Khaled Mishaal, the former Head of Hamas bureau, when he considered this article as a sign of vital evidence for Hamas flexibility, adaptability and maturity, asking USA and the world to grab the opportunity by giving Hamas the recognition and the legitimacy. The pre-condition mentioned at the beginning of the article regarding Hamas acceptance of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders as a formula of national consensus renders the text of the document as contradictory and unreasonable. Hamas insisted at the beginning of Article 20 that the liberation of historical Palestine from the sea to the river is a duty and refused to recognize the Zionist entity (Israel) on any part of Palestine. This position contradicts the second part related to Hamas acceptance for the formula of establishing Palestinian state on 1967 borders. Consequently, Israel and the world will not accept to give the Palestinians the right to have a state without ending the struggle and having the guarantees that the new state will not be a place for launching wars against it.⁹

The reason behind the clear paradox regarding the previous issue and others could be the will for Hamas to maintain its internal unity by satisfying the extreme stream within Hamas. That is why it has given more attention for the religious aspect which is reflected through conditions and the determinations that the articles contain. Also, it could be a sort of protection for Hamas itself from the extreme Salafist organisations or other Islamic organisations like Jihad who compete with Hamas to gain the public support. So, Hamas aim to achieve the satisfaction of two contradicting parts, the external front and the internal front, was the main reason behind its adapting such confusing positions in its new document.¹⁰

Moreover, Hamas has accepted the existence of another state (Israel) on the Palestinian land by its acceptance to have a Palestinian State on 1967. It insured that it never will give up the armed struggle against Israel and insisted to implement the Palestinian refugees right for return to their original places, evacuation of all the Israeli settlements, full sovereignty for the state and East Jerusalem as its capital. Therefore, it had insured its original position regarding the issue of the recognition of the state of Israel by absolute refusal. Also, Hamas has indicated its rejection for the previous agreement between Israel and PLO announcing its refusal for Oslo accords. Further, it had added that their strategic choice will continue to be the armed resistance without ignoring the need to use other means.¹¹

In general, Hamas has become more mature, pragmatic, realistic and moderate by adopting new positions that appeared through its new document. This orientation had relieved it from several ideological restrictions that caused isolation, boycotting and preventing the achievement of recognition and legitimacy for Hamas. Also, it has become closer to apply the conditions that the internal and external political actors' demand. However, the paradoxes that emerged through the text of its new document created suspicions regarding the extent of the credibility of Hamas orientation. So, Hamas until now has not achieved its expected goals after declaring its new principles and policies. All the signs show that all the political actors in the internal arena as well as the external arena still believe that Hamas did not fully respond to the required conditions.¹²

By and large, the followers can realize crystallized consensus among the most influential political actors in the region that at least considering Hamas new position is insufficient. The Israelis have clearly considered Hamas new document as a tricky action for the world. They believe that Hamas still seeks to end the existence of their state by using terror and violence. USA and other Western states adopted the Israeli position. Also, the Arab and Muslim leaders in Riyadh summit did not react to the announcement of the president of USA Donald Trump considering Hamas as a terrorist organisation. He asked the Arab and Muslim leaders to join together for fighting terror by all the means including drying their financial resources. Moreover, President Mahmoud Abbas had declared adoption of hard actions against Hamas and its authority in Gaza. The declared goal for President Abbas actions is to end Hamas hijacking Gaza and to achieve Palestinian unity.¹³

The denial and ignorance for Hamas new positions gave signs for its alliance, the Qatari leaders who suffered criticism from the Gulf States and others, accusing them of supporting the terrorist groups. These developments may be the reason behind the Qatari ambassador announcement from Gaza considering that Gaza is going to face increasing difficulties in the immediate future. That can be considered as a reality perusal for the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Notice more: <http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=489581>

¹⁰ <http://www.alhayat.com/Opinion/Writers/21808653/>

¹¹ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4956877,00.html>

¹² <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/new-look-hamas/articale18385234.ece>

¹³ <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.792436>

coming future dependent upon the political developments in the region. This can also be interpreted as a sign that the support of Qatar itself for Hamas and Gaza will stop or at least will be prevented by others under their pressure against Qatar's role in the region including Gaza. The news circulation related to Qatar demanding some Hamas leaders to leave Qatar as a result of an external pressure confirms the previous explanation.¹⁴

As mentioned, the ambiguity of Hamas new positions in its published document could be another reason behind the negative response from others. Also, it is possible to add another reason which reflects the desire of the Western States to impose more pressure upon Hamas pushing it for accepting their conditions fully. However, the exaggerated demands from Hamas could lead for the opposite result or to unknown situation instead of achieving the planned goals. The hawks within the organisation will argue that the moderation and change will not lead to a real achievement. It will encourage the enemies of the Palestinians to ask for more concessions and surrender. So, Hamas fear is from pushing it to be an original copy of Fatah movement which had accepted all the conditions and the demands of the West with all the international requirements without getting the price. The result will lead Hamas for intransigence positions as a response for the absence of positive policy from others, which should include the will to convince through open dialogue and to expand through positive response for changes by taking practical steps supporting Hamas moderates for their positive orientation.¹⁵

The attempt of Khaled Mishaal to market Hamas new positions through Doha declaration or through his interview after that with the CNN ignored all the interesting aspects. Externally, the situation was not comfortable especially after the results of Riyadh summit, which spread the consideration of Hamas as a terrorist organization among Arabs and Muslim States, that their leaders did not response to USA President Donald Trump announcing Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Moreover, the choices in front of Hamas have been narrowed regarding its alliances map which was confined to three states, Qatar, Turkey and Iran. Two of these states are part of USA original alliances which made adopting policies floating in the American orbit.¹⁶

Internally, the reaction from political actors was characterized by mistrust, especially when they referred to Hamas practice in Gaza which continued its harsh measurements against all its opposition. So, the response from the President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority reflected the mistrust by declaring imposed hard actions against Hamas. Several economic steps were adopted to punish Hamas by increasing the difficulties for controlling Gaza. Also, Abbas new trend is against the Israeli policy. If the Israeli government refuses his steps, he will appear in front of the world the real partner for peace and the Israelis will appear as being responsible for the division in the Palestinian arena supporting Hamas controlling Gaza. The Palestinian authority believes that the message of Hamas through its new document for Israel is to arrange long term truce versus easing the economic hardship by ending the siege against Gaza.¹⁷

III. HAMAS AND THE HIGHER PALESTINIAN INTERESTS

The interest of Palestine as a home land and its people should be the first priority for all Palestinians, individuals, groups, organisations or parties. Each will have its own perspective and point of view regarding this matter. The right national interest should reflect the acceptance and the satisfaction of all. This can be achieved by enhancing the organization of an advanced dialogue, political discourse, mutual understanding and tolerance regarding the needs diversity. Through this process, people can formulate their own national interest. The result will lead for unity, harmony and ability to work together.

The mentioned process is not accepted by the Palestinian organizations as a track for cooperation and achieving unity. At least, all the Palestinian organisations compounded under the umbrella of PLO except the Islamic organisation had adopted this process. Their practice and PLO formula indicated some extent secular and democratic orientation. On the contrary, Hamas as well as other Islamic organizations still refuse a clear adoption of these concepts and maneuver regarding this matter.¹⁸ The legislative elections held on 25th January 2006 witnessed the emission of Hamas special manifesto. It was considered as a developed document that adopted the Western democratic and secular terms, concepts and principles.¹⁹ However, the political behavior of Hamas after its victory in the election of 2006 indicated the absence of its readiness for implementing the adopting principles in their election manifesto. Several elements had influenced Hamas political reverse. But the main stumbling block was the traditional belief that Hamas had in its charter and the main role that the hawks

¹⁴ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4970694,00.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/01/hamas-new-charter-palestine-israel-1967-borders>

¹⁶ <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/03/middleeast/palestinian-hamas-khaled-meshaal/index.html>

¹⁷ Meir, Shimrit, Netanyahu Dilemma, article (Arabic Language): <http://www.al-masdar.net/>

¹⁸ Abu Baker, Baker, Hamas Document in the Balance (scale), Alentilaqah Research Center (A.R.C), Palestinian Authority 2017, pp 16- 19.

¹⁹ Tamimi, Azzam, Hamas: a history from within, First Edition, Olive Branch Press 2011, pp 292- 316.

Notice more: Caridi, Paola, Translated by Andrea Teti, Hamas: from resistance to government, Seven Stories Press New York 2012., pp 181- 190.

had within the organisation.²⁰ So, Hamas coup by using power to control Gaza, freedom restrictions, radicalization and extremism had increased the distrust regarding Hamas positions.²¹

Hamas political behavior that reflected inconsistency between the declared principles and practice could be the main reason for the suspicion regarding the contents of its new document internally and externally. Moreover, the concepts contradiction which the new document contains regarding Hamas new orientation and identifying itself could be another important element that may increase the mistrust toward Hamas. The preamble of the new document with the articles, 1, 4, 6, 28, 30, 33 and 34 had included the new conceptual principles that Hamas adopted. The concepts of nationality, democracy and secularity were scornful against Islam as the Muslim Brotherhood Movement considered them before. Internal discourse took place within this movement which resulted in acceptance for these concepts through the branches of the movement in Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia. The preamble and articles of Hamas new document contained democracy principles, secular and citizenship concepts through definition without mentioning them directly. Also, Hamas document kept on Islam as part of its identification. This adoption contradicts the concept of the secularity especially regarding the state position and role, which should be for all its citizens as equal in front of the law and having the same rights in all life spheres.²²

Depending upon ideological perspectives, Hamas like other Islamic organisations and more than other Palestinian organizations, believes that it is right. The strength of this belief is rooted within the religious aspect which gave the movement and its members the legacy for their act as representing the goodwill of God. This has insured for them that their position and acts are absolutely right compared with others that represent evil. Thus, Hamas ideological beliefs have not contributed for facilitating the road for compromise with others. Also, it has led for not just ignoring others and their positions, but also forbidding them and allowing Jihad against them which means giving legalization for the duty of adoption aggressive instrument to confront them.²³

The experience for Hamas along its short history compared with others in the Palestinian political arena has taught it, to some extent, about the need for realism and pragmatism. The change at least in the context that the new document texts contain pointed for some development in all the spheres, internally and externally, regarding the concepts and principles, as well as identification of itself, its enemy, its goals and its legal instruments. The theoretical change that the new document included were expressed by Khaled Mishaal who stressed that these changes will be taught for all Hamas members through all its public and organisational posts.²⁴

In the same direction, before the declaration of the new document, there were some voices from Hamas leaders and intellectuals who admitted that the movement had committed some harsh faults. Some consider the charter structure and formatting as a wrong step taken in a hurry.²⁵ Others have emphasized that the military coup in Gaza and the use of force was one of the major faults for the Hamas. While other positions in the same direction were announced regarding the ability and the readiness of Hamas to be part of the government, considering Hamas winning the election as a surprise that they were not mature for because their aim was to have a strong representative as a strong opposition for the movement in the parliament to protect its political existence.²⁶

Khaled Mishaal, the previous leader of Hamas, was very clear in his presentation through the conference held in Doha- Qatar 24- 25 September 2016 titled “Transformation of the Islamic Movements,” when he admitted the faults that were committed by Islamists in general through the Arab Spring and Hamas in particular. He mentioned two faults: the first was exaggeration in estimating the real positions in particular regarding the estimation of self-power and self- ability as a result of experience and information absence. The second fault was related to dealing with home land partners. The faults indicated that Hamas thought that controlling alone by ignoring other political actors is easy which resulted from a wrong feeling of overconfidence for the self- power and majority legitimacy. Hamas had found it so difficult because the adopted alternative theory as a choice for ending Fatah role and taking its place was considered as wrong orientation. The right treatment for these faults should be by adopting democracy, partnership and national coincide seeking for acceptance common denominator regarding the political and the resistance issues. So, singularity on the national level by any political actor should be avoided in decision making especially regarding war or peace.²⁷

²⁰ Ibid, pp 194- 196, 205, 224, 226.

²¹ Ibid, pp 285- 286, 308- 313.

²² Abu Baker, Baker, op. cit.

²³ Abu Baker, Baker, Hamas: Rostrums and Swords, First Edition, Palestine 2008, pp 10, 17, 52, 90 and 112- 115.

²⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/new-hamas-program-softens-language-but-some-goals-remain/2017/05/02/8ed72d7a-2f07-11e7-a335-fa0ae1940305_story.html?tid=hybrid_collaborative_1_na&utm=0d56add0a1f6

²⁵ Tamimi, Azzam, op. cit, pp 148- 151.

Notice more: Caridi, Paola, pp 99- 105.

²⁶ Ibid, pp 194-195, 205 and 258.

²⁷ Khaled Mishaal, Presentation in Doha- Qatar Conference, Titled: Transformation of Islamic Movements, which held in 24- 25 September 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CK58V9jIK_M
Notice more: <https://www.arabi21.com/story/948979/>

This orientation has taken more influence and push by some voices inside Hamas. Some have for the first time criticized internal issues like the last election process which included some faults. There were some wrong positions and evaluations in the past especially regarding losing the opportunity to be close to Yasser Arafat in 1994 supporting him instead of choosing unnecessary confrontation with Fatah in 1996 as a result of the extremist role. Moreover, they asked the movement to have the courage to regret and apologize for the practiced political faults. As they declared, this step should be taken toward others who were harmed or injured, be they individuals, organisations or the Palestinian people in general for the faults that the movement had committed and caused.²⁸ Calls like this could be an important step for rectification, adaptation and reconciliation which give significant weight for democratic concepts, as the law sovereignty, tolerance, partnership, participation and preference for dialogue.

IV. HAMAS EQUATION REGARDING DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL RELATION

The domestic and external arenas are very important for any political actor seeking existence and influence. The legitimacy from both is very a crucial issue which can pave the way widely for acting. Achievement of all these aspects connected with acceptance as a basic factor depends upon the goals, instruments and the rules which determined the process for both. These elements usually emerged through the identification of the political entity and by representing their principles within declared document.

Hamas is not a unique case. It is a deep rooted organization which identified itself by declared documents. These documents determined its principles, its rules, its instruments, its goals as well as its relations with others in the domestic and external arena. The adopted principles by Hamas determined the priorities and the direction for this movement in general regarding other organisations. Through its identification within the charter, Hamas declared Islam as its intellectual reference and indicated its integral relation with the Muslim Brotherhood Movement which represented itself as an international movement.²⁹

This determination indicates the reflection toward priorities for its goals and its relation with others. As an Islamic movement, its principles and goals are to implement God's law on the ground as their slogan called for. Nationality as a concept or a principle was determined through Islamic understanding as a part of Islamic order. Homeland is all the Islamic land, so nationality as a partial identity is not accepted. There are no Palestinian, Iraqi, Tunisian or any other. Instead, there is Islamic Omahhaving the Islamic land as the home land. These are the main beliefs for the Muslim Brotherhood Movement which considers the liberation of Palestine as a result following the creation of the united Islamic state as a first priority. So, all Muslims should be an integral part of the liberation effort.³⁰

Moreover, Hamas identifying itself as a branch of that movement means that it is an integral part of this organization. So, its loyalty and allegiance will be first for it in all the spheres. Also, the priority preference, the adopted principles and the general goals will be its own. This orientation made Hamas movement close more toward issues that the Palestinian domestic communities and organisations did not agree for, while they consider this orientation as contradicting the Palestinian people interest.³¹

Externally, Palestinians seek for legitimacy and support for their struggle against the Israeli occupation. Their freedom, independence and sovereignty are the core issue which they seek to achieve. Other issues could be provoking others to act against the Palestinian main goals as unacceptable goals in international arena. The Muslim Brotherhood Movement has its own global goals that relate to spreading Islam and to create the Islamic state which could be as a threat for other states and other communities. So, Hamas connection with these aims put it in front of its people and others as an international organisation not as a pure national one. Despite that, Hamas had tried from its first charter and through the developments in its last document to emphasize its nationality as a priority, still the practice of Hamas and the relation with some of the political camps that have clear orientation toward the mother movement provoke untrusted positions regarding its keen policy.³²

Islamic law (Sharia) and advocacy are the major elements that distinguish the Islamic movements and organisations. They are defining and formulating the policy goals for these organisations causing inflexibility to deal with reality. In other words, intermarry between politics and advocacy created difficulties dealing with the needs of reality. This situation could be the explanation for the contradiction between Hamas declared adoption of democratic concepts and its practice on the ground. The examination of Hamas implementing the new declared concepts had pointed for hesitation or contradiction. It can show that Hamas trend is more toward the general aims than the national ones.³³

<https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/281022/>

²⁸ <https://www.amad.ps/ar/?Action=printNews&ID=172244>

²⁹ Tamimi, Azzam, op. cit, pp 147- 165.

³⁰ Tamimi, Azzam, presentation in Doha- Qatar conference, titled: Transformation of Islamic Movements, which held in 24- 25 September 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn6zyG8xo5k>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Abu Ramadan, Mohsen, Hamas in Ruling (Power): the sociological and political implications (Gaza Strip 2006- 2009), JazertuAlward Library, Cairo 2010, pp 14- 16.

Notice more: Tamam, Hussam, the Muslim Brotherhood: Years before the Revolution, Dar Al- Shrorouk- Cairo- Egypt, First Edition 2010, pp 178- 181.

³³ Ibid.

Notice more: Abu Ramadan, Mohsen, op. cit, pp 139- 146.

Hamas determined its relation with others in the internal arena and external one depending upon their distance from adopting Islam principles. This is the basic element for Hamas conducting relations with others. But, practically, Hamas sought for relations with others especially in the external arena according to pragmatism factors. It showed real flexibility in this arena by ignoring some of its important principles. The new declared positions regarding Israel and the peace process flagged this orientation. Also, it left the reluctant camp, Syria and Iran, to the moderate camp Turkey and Qatar. However, the last camp is more close to the Muslim Brotherhood Movement. Despite this, Hamas invested great efforts to improve its relations with the new Egyptian regime that ended the Muslim Brotherhood regime there. Also, it sought for improving its relation with other states and regimes that fighting their mother organisation like Jordan, Saudi Arabia and others from the Sunni camp. Thus, trying to maintain its relations with Iran and Hezbollah despite the disputed situation in Syria.³⁴

The pragmatism and flexibility that Hamas adopted through its policy and relation regarding the external arena was not implemented at the same level in the internal arena. The success achieved by Hamas in the external arena was significant compared to the achievements in the internal arena. It had succeeded in maintaining its existence and political influence despite all the impossible conditions imposed on it. However, Hamas did not adopt the same readiness for compromise internally. There could be several reasons for this situation. Some of them related to internal demands for Hamas or from Hamas regarding other domestic political actors, also regarding the political positions and roles that Hamas asked for or the others are asking from it. Others are related to external factors, demands and prices that Hamas should consider or others asking Hamas for awareness and acceptance. Until this stage, Hamas has demonstrated its keenness for gaining acceptance and legality from the external arena more than the domestic one.³⁵

Unfortunately, Hamas had given weight for some factors like fear and singularity. It fears being considered as another copy of Fatah organisation by adopting its policy. This caused Hamas to keep itself different and distinguished from others especially from its main political competitor, Fatah. Fear as a causing factor and singularity as a result for the previous one were the combination of factors that highly influenced Hamas position regarding the domestic relations. So, Hamas usually used escaping forward toward highlighting its ideological beliefs to emphasize its singularity as a unique one compared to others.³⁶

In addition, the geopolitical factor influenced Hamas orientation and policies by affecting its relation priorities exactly as well as the ideological one. Through the history of the Palestinian new revolution this factor had affected its independency negatively. The Palestinian organizations needed to maintain their existence on the lands of the Arabs. Also, they were depending upon their support politically, financially and militarily. This special situation distinguished the Palestinians case which highlights their struggle in their own land and the lack of independence for their financial and political position. The result for this situation affected the Palestinian orientations in all the spheres. They could not adopt their own positions without taking into consideration the policies and the interests others. The interests' confrontation between the Palestinians and Arabs led in the past as well as in present for the creation of impossible situation for them. They lost their existence in Jordan after the black September in 1970 confrontation, military actions by the Syrian regime in 1976 and many other harsh disputes with many other Arab regimes. The Gulf States cut their financial and political support as a result of Arafat position in the Gulf war against Iraq. The Palestinians considered their revolution as an impossible revolution that continued to exist despite all the obstacles.³⁷

Hamas is not a unique or special case. It has suffered the same situation. Its leaders were forced to leave Jordan by order from the regime considering them as *persona non grata* in 1995, left Syria after the regime asked them for support against the public opposition and the Iranians with Hezbollah minimized their support for Hamas as a result of its position toward the Syrian regime. This pressured Hamas to join new alliance and adopt new political orientation. Also, Qatar crisis in 2017 with Egypt and Gulf States including other Arab States has put Hamas in difficult situation. It needs to examine its positions and alliances again by re-conforming its priorities.³⁸

The Palestinian experience regarding dealing with such situation is so opulent. PLO history could be an important example for Hamas to take the needed advantage. Wherever PLO had faced external intervention, it escaped toward maintaining their unity by achieving internal mutual understanding. The main solution for such situation is to achieve unity that can give the entire Palestinian organisation the ability to protect their collective interest and to face imposing conditions by preventing utilization of others for the isolation of any organisation.

³⁴ Ibid.

Notice more: Scham, Paul and Osama Abu- Irshaid, *Hamas Ideological Rigidity and Political Flexibility*, United State Institute of Peace, Special Report- June 2009: www.usip.org

³⁵ Ibid.

Notice more: Abu Ramadan, Mohsen, *op. cit.*

³⁶ Scham, Paul and Osama Abu- Irshaid, *op. cit.*

Notice more: Cardi, Paola, *op. cit.*, pp 102- 103

³⁷ Tamimi, Azzam, *op. cit.*, pp 24- 25, 42, 71- 98.

³⁸ Ibid.

Notice more: Caridi, Paola, *op. cit.*, pp 109- 114.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this article show that the changes and the justification adopted by Hamas after long internal debate within its organization were not satisfactory to others. So, Hamas had faced shoveled stream of escalation instead of understanding and openness. The concept of renewal or disappearance did not fit into reality. Several reasons caused such a result which indicates the complicated situation that not just Hamas faces, but also the Palestinian issue in general. Hamas has its responsibility as well as other political actors in the region for reaching the existing situation. However, Hamas can avoid this difficult situation through removing the suspicions and vagueness that distinguished its new positions. Moreover, it can make the needed modifications that from one side satisfied at least part of the political actors and minimizing the rejection among them. Such demand did not mean that Hamas should accept fully the conditions that others ask for, but to be open more for the Palestinian political experience, to benefit from it and to deal with their historical dimension positively. The most important matter is to distinguish between practical politics and ideological culture.

Regarding the issue of the Palestinian national interest and Hamas position, it is possible to conclude by indicating the existence of several obstacles that preventing the Palestinian factions from reaching agreement on acceptable political term. The conceptual contradiction that the Palestinian political arena had along with the collision between announcing adopted concepts or positions and the practice on the ground are critical elements that make the aim unreachable until now.

The main conclusion could indicate that Hamas orientation regarding the internal arena needs more attention with high responsibility. It should reflect practically the new adopted principles which could maintain stable relations with others in the domestic arena. Self-confidence is needed to reach the goal of cooperation and participation especially when all the parties face the same enemy and share the same future.

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