

The “Iron Fisted” Leader of Hamas in Palestine - Where is Mohammed Deif?

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In the ravaged streets of Gaza and the shrinking hills of the West bank, Palestinians- in desperation- scream his name. On the walls of the twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon his name is spray painted-in hope- beneath yellow flags baring the logo of Hamas. In prayer services across Palestine his name is invoked, begging for his return, the return of Palestine and... salvation from the increasing horrors of occupation.

This man, their champion- who fought for all Palestinians and won- to them, seems now their only hope. But he is missing in action. Barely three years ago, this man was the most dangerous man in Palestine. For he did for Palestine what no other has done. Where then, today, when needed most, is the “Lion of Palestine?” Where is... Mohammed Deif?

“Without an army for the people, there is nothing for the people.” -Mao Tse-tung (“On Guerrilla Warfare”)

During the [2014 invasion of Gaza by Israel](#) - with massive US military support- and thus confronted with two of the most militaristic expansionist global powers, Gazans and a horrified world looked on in hand-wringing anguish. After watching for weeks as Israel destroyed civilian Palestinian property and innocent lives in the thousands, this same world breathed a long overdue sigh of relief when Hamas, as the only military on earth to defend Gaza, commanded these villains of inhumanity to their knees: the negotiating table in Cairo.

The iron-fisted leader of Hamas, Mohammed Deif, was then closer than ever before to a final victory of the autonomy for Gaza and a national victory for the nation of Palestine, and... for the civilized world.

But next, Israeli influence, Arab nations’ hypocrisy, Palestinian Authority (PA) treachery and US coercion [f...ed the whole thing up!](#)

Again, this week Israeli warplanes returned to indiscriminately targeting Gaza civilians. At the same time, [Israeli soldiers switched from tear gas to live ammo](#) to quell the spirits of Palestinians who do not accept the theft of their rightful capital, Jerusalem. [Post-war funds for rebuilding Gaza](#) have been diverted at Israeli request. Water supplies have been cut off repeatedly, as has electricity. Their land is seized regularly and replaced with more and more illegal settlements. All borders are closed. Medical supplies scarce. Disease routine. Poverty endemic. Apartheid rampant. Genocide obvious!

And the [leaders of the world do nothing?!](#)

So, where is this champion of Palestine? As his people chant, his name echoing off the remaining grey concrete walls left standing in a razed Gaza, there is a desperation in their cries. Will not someone help them? Will not someone protect them? Where is this military genius? When needed most...where is Mohammed Deif!

The Israeli controlled media, having few facts about Mohammed Deif, much less any willingness to expand on the reasons for Israeli's 2014 direct military defeat, tries to vilify Mohammed Deif with vague general terms like "shadowy," and "relatively unknown." A myopic press misses the most important and accurate description of this life-long champion of the Palestinian people; "military scholar," one whose definition translates as: student of guerrilla warfare- the tactics that once brought Israel to its knees.

Historically this effective military strategy has given freedom and nationalism to many oppressed peoples. Guerrilla warfare has built nations. What would today's South Africa be without the armed resistance within the African National Congress (ANC)? Would Ireland have gained its autonomy from Britain without the Irish Republican Army (IRA)?

Would Israel be a nation?

With the skill of [Mao ridding China of the Japanese from 1937-1945](#) or [Che Guevara's victorious popular uprisings in Cuba of 1954-59](#), Mohammed Deif had, in 2014, by similar necessity, made his mentors very proud indeed. Palestine has been under the barbaric oppression of Israeli hypocrisy, an oppression that long ago crossed the lines of inhumanity. Right through Gaza.

Hence, the historical need for Hamas.

[Guerrilla warfare](#), however, is more than guns and bloodshed. Designed to terminally conquer oppression, victory requires a chess game that transcends mere military strategy into political cunning. Mohammed Deif, while presumably hiding in an unknown bunker deep under Gaza, can reflect on losing his wife and daughter to an Israeli tank shell with his name on it. He had once, as predicted by history and the practices of Mao and Guevara, turned the horror of a month-long legend of Israeli blood-lust in Gaza into what was, in the immediate aftermath of the war, a strong political negotiating position for all of Palestine.

But that was too long ago.

Proof of this once [bitter-sweet victory was easily shown in the 2014 war's ultimate cease fire](#); one that was finally called for by Israel after the US vetoed two similar UNSC resolutions. This could be seen at that time on any TV appearance by Israeli Prime Minister, BiBi Netanyahu, when this seventy-two hour cease fire finally began. Due to unexpectedly large Israeli troop casualties and, like his nation, drawn, tired, and confused on the facts, BiBi and his arrogant sneer was conspicuously missing. His brash confidence was also missing, then relegated to the bottom of his own desk's trash can along with the shreds of that [week's sudden and shocking Israeli press revelations](#): 1600 wounded Israeli soldiers to go with at least sixty-four dead.

Worse, for this man who personally began this month's long barbarity, that morning's Israeli public approval poll regarding his most recent series of war crimes had plummeted to 60%- not because of his resultant horrors, but because of his failing to meet Israeli expectations of finally completing their demand for genocide. Even BiBi's Nobel Peace Prize-winning

Washington puppet, then US president Obama, was also dangling wildly on his own puppet strings in the fierce wind of public worldwide outrage.

Oh, the “sorrows of empire!” What more can a war criminal do?

For Israel, [these Hamas military and political victories](#) at the time further emboldened worldwide opposition to Zionist expansion. Throughout Palestine and across the world, the consciousness of the world further awakened to the threat of Israel, with the horrific images of Gaza now firmly, and forever, in their mind. The [BDS movement](#) skyrocketed accordingly.

Mohammed Deif had shown national leadership in what seemed a victory for Hamas and for Gaza. And for the nation of Palestine.

For that Mohammed Deif was- too long ago- the most dangerous man in Palestine.

“The guerrilla fighter is the Jesuit of warfare.” - Che Guevara (“Guerrilla Warfare”)

Two of the most successful and renowned revolutionaries of the 20th century also authored the two most read books about guerrilla warfare. In his 1937 manifesto, [On Guerrilla Warfare](#), Mao observed that,

“without the support of the people, the guerrilla is a fish out of water, and it cannot survive.”

In agreement, Guevara states in, [Guerrilla Warfare](#), that, the guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people and, “must have a moral conduct that shows him to be a true priest of the reform to which he aspires.”

Indeed.

Mohammed Deif was born in 1965 into the Khan Younis refugee camp in southern Gaza. Deif’s family was originally from the pre-1948 Palestinian village of Kochva near present-day Ashkelon which was razed to make way for Israel. Due to the wholesale eviction of Palestinians from Palestine to the many long-term refugee camps, Mohammed Deif was born into a prison.

He is the personification of Palestine.

As a teenager, he joined up with the Muslim Brotherhood and was active in student politics at Gaza’s Islamic University. At the outbreak of the first intifada, Deif joined the ranks of Hamas’ militia. He was arrested by Israel in May 1989, and sentenced to sixteen months in prison.

Released in 1991, Deif went straight to the al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, where he met his mentor, Yahya “the engineer” Ayyash, who headed the brigades until his assassination in 1996. Known for his bomb-making skills, Ayyash taught these skills and the necessity of military tactics to Mohammed Deif while the later continued to rise in the command structure of Hamas.

According to Israel's DebkaFiles.com, in 1994 the Hamas cells under his command kidnapped and killed three Israeli soldiers, Nachshon Wachsmann, Aryeh Frankenthal and Shahar Simani.

When the Israelis assassinated Ayyash using an explosive mobile phone, Deif masterminded a series of lethal bomb attacks on Israeli civilians in February and March of 1996, in which fifty-eight Israelis were killed in one week.



Muhammad Deif then went underground. Photos of him since are extremely rare with none seen in the last decade.

Of course, the Israelis tried to kill him. They failed five times, increasing his legend, and earning the nickname, "the cat with nine lives." The sixth time, they killed his wife and daughter.

On August 22, 2001, Deif and his deputy, Adnan al-Awal escaped a targeted assassination attempt. On September 26, 2002, an IDF Apache helicopter fired two Hellfire missiles at Deif's car as he returned home from a visit of condolence in the Sheikh Rawan district of Gaza. He survived.

The IDF tried again in August 2003, bombing the top floor of an apartment building where the Hamas military leadership, including al-Awal, Haniyeh, Deif and the movements spiritual leader Ahmad Yassin were meeting. The men were on the building's bottom floor and escaped with light injuries.

The Israeli assassination attempts have reportedly left him in need of continued medical care. When he travelled, Mohammed Deif went with a heavy escort of two separate teams of security agents whom he personally selects and trusts. Apparently, he is also a master of disguise and has reportedly moved about Gaza on his own without detection. Since there are no recent pictures of him, this may work well for him and shows the kind of brass he brought to his leadership of Hamas.

Only two top Hamas figures know where he is and only one, former Gaza Prime Minister Haniyeh is thought to have been able to have direct contact with him. Though rarely seen, Deif controls Hamas' political and military assets with a tight grip. The Hamas military council and general staff wait for his blessing before taking any measures. The same deference is shown by the Hamas external politburo chief Khaled Meshaal; Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh; and the chief of the al-Qassam Brigades, Marwan Issa.

The true power of Mohammed Deif within the internal political structure of Hamas was clearly shown in the highly secretive 2012-2013 elections for Hamas' governing body, the Shura Council. Despite the attempt by Hamas political chief Khaled Meshaal to secure seats

for his own loyalists, Deif prevailed, gaining further support and new seats for his hand-picked supporters instead.

So, where is Mohammed Deif now?

“In order to get rid of the gun, it is necessary to take up the gun.” -Mao.

Guerrilla Warfare is a method of war that can be traced back as far as the 3rd century B.C. when [Fabius Maximus successfully utilized this form of warfare against Hannibal's much larger forces](#) during the Second Punic War. Ever since then, the tactics of guerra de guerrillas, or Guerrilla Warfare, have been used, again and again, often proving victorious, throughout history.

Mao Tse-Tung's use and theory of Guerrilla Warfare was used and adapted by [Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap](#) who led the victories over two great countries with nothing more than an ill-equipped insurgent army and the will to fight and resist. And tunnels. Miles and miles of tunnels. Why? For their country.

In Mexico, sub-commander, ["Marcos," led his Guerrillas out of the hills of Chiapas, in the 1994 "Zapatista uprising"](#) to deliver blow after blow against an oppressive Mexican army. He too brought the oppressors to the negotiating table... and peace to Chiapas. For his people.

Reportedly Marcos carried with him at all times these two most important bibles of military craft that had already served history- and nations-so well.

Hamas was created in 1992 under the direction of Yahya Ayyash becoming the only Palestinian socio-political organization to offer the many missing social services needed by Gazans; while maintaining the dedication to regaining the nation of Palestine. A classified US Congressional report grudgingly admits that, "its [Hamas] social services wing have been very popular and important among Palestinians."

The primary task of Hamas, beyond popular support, is to build a coherent military organization to support and enforce the political goals of Hamas in Palestine. Hamas military defence forces in Gaza are the [Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades](#) named after an influential Sunni Islamic preacher in the times of the British Mandate of Palestine, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam. In 1930 al-Qassam organized and established the Black Hand, an anti-Zionist and anti-British militant organization. Prior to his death in 1935, he had recruited, enlisted and provided military training to upwards of eight hundred men. The Black Hand was the precursor to Hamas.

Under the training and tactics chosen by Mohammed Deif, Hamas has become a formidable army in the mould of Hezbollah, which thrashed their own Israeli opposition into a cease-fire in Lebanon in 2006. Likewise, Hamas' strength is in its ability to carry out quickly complex lethal mobile attacks.

As required by the texts of Mao and Guevara, the brigades can count on a huge pool of individuals seeking to join their ranks. Hamas reportedly receives some aid from Iran (10% of its budget by some estimates) but apparently derives most of its financing from Palestinian expatriates around the world, private sympathizers in Arab states, and legitimate

businesses in Palestinian controlled areas. Foreign sympathizers supply the militants with weapons smuggled in using tunnels. Hamas engineers provide the fighters with effective homemade weapons such as the al-Bana, the Batar, the Yasin and the Qassam rocket.

In July 2006, the Al-Qassam Brigades staged the operation which led to the capture of Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. This turned out to be a perfectly executed plan by Hamas as the negotiations for Shalit's safe release equalled the release of 1027 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

“War is the continuation of politics by other means.” -Carl von Clausewitz

Mao declares that Guerrilla war strategies are pursued, to achieve purely political goals. He continues to emphasize that, “the simple-minded militarists must be made to realize the relationship that exists between politics and military affairs.”

Indeed. [Such as the fraudulent Cairo peace talks.](#) Signalling defeat, militarily, Israel asked for an extension of the war's initial seventy-two hour cease fire. Mohammed Deif's military victory was the necessary precursor to the ultimate goal of political victory; freedom for Gaza. However, this short-term victory was turned into defeat by others who next turned victory into defeat...politically!

Hamas had inflicted severe damage to the overwhelming might of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and the Israeli economy. Then Israeli people were shocked to reality at the news of the 1600 plus severely injured IDF soldiers. (Reports indicate that the official Israeli death toll, which was stated to be sixty-four, was a low-ball fabrication). Hence, it was no wonder that IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz went so far as to declare, “now [the IDF] move into a period of rehabilitation.”

Israel's war, Operation Protective Edge, in Gaza cost the Israeli economy some \$1.44 billion, its central bank governor Karnit Flug said. His assessment was that it would reach up to around 0.5 percent of GDP, which is up to 5 billion shekels, he told Israel Channel Ten television at the time.

Worse, after all that, the IDF admitted, “Hamas is still standing and left with most of its military infrastructure unscathed, provides it [volunteers] with the core of a regular Palestinian army, which the Islamists did not have before the launch of Operation Defensive Edge on July 7.”

Predictably, the ranks of Hamas and the Al-Qassam Brigades are swelling.

Indeed. Your new-born child, or your mother, or your brother, or your sister, grandmother, brother, aunt, uncle, or just your entire family has been blown to bits by an unapologetic demon that celebrates, very publicly its genocide. What does a man do who has lost everything?

Reluctantly, faced with no remaining choice other than surrender and therefore nothing to lose, that man, he picks up a gun.

Press TV, in interviews with Gazans during the weeks after the war, reported that despite the destruction of the Gaza Strip by Israeli horrors, Palestinians remain loyal to the

resistance movement, and to Hamas.

The toll on Gazans shocked the consciousness of a world that has also witnessed too much of the Israeli regime's war crimes, before and after. The total 2014 war carnage alone: over 2100 Palestinians dead, more than four-hundred-thirty of them children.

Hence, worldwide condemnation of Israel continues to grow.

The post-war, August 9, 2014, worldwide day of protest in favour of Gaza, Palestine, and a return to humanity saw millions join mass protests in cities in virtually every nation on earth. Outrage against Israel is global and growing with each new atrocity. The pictures don't lie.

In London, Lindsey German, convenor of Stop the War Coalition, an umbrella group of NGOs, said: "The level of anger [against Israel] is unprecedented."

While it was trendy, former British Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said that the UK government should suspend its arms exports to Israel if the Tel Aviv regime resumes its military attacks on Gaza. Francoise Holland also temporarily broke ranks and called for a stop to the genocide. Bolivia's president Evo Morales called Israel a "Terrorist State". Then, every day more world leaders were forced by popular opinion to make statements condemning Israel despite their master's hidden purse strings.

It did not take long for these same world leaders to return to ignoring the many new war crimes of Israel. Three long years later, all but Evo Morales have ceased any new words of protest. And Palestine is worse than ever before. And, thanks to America, without a capital... nor country!

Now that it factually appears that Israel completely controls US foreign policy as applied to Palestine, desperation of its people and its need for a new champion is understandable. Consider: US president Trump has functionally abandoned any potential two state solution-anathema to the Likudists who hold power- and has denoted Jerusalem as the capital of Israel while simultaneously [cutting off US aid to Palestine](#) and to the [UN's UNRWA](#) while accusing the Palestinians of disrespect for not going to their slaughter willingly. His actions, of course, have further emboldened the Israelis who rang in the New Year, on Dec 31, 2017 by voting in the Likud Central Committee to [seize the remainder of the west bank](#) not already stolen, despite multiple UN resolutions, and then returning to shooting and [jailing children as young as 13 years old](#) who also peacefully demand freedom instead of life in this deteriorating national prison.

[Reportedly, Mohammed Deif is now in failing health](#) due to the summation of his many injuries. It is not likely that he is dead, however, since the Israeli press would certainly trumpet this news. Nor is it likely that his influence or his passion for his Palestinian homeland is ignored in the underground meetings about what to do. Al-Monitor news service reports that two familiar figures have taken over direct command of Hamas — Deif's long-time deputy, Marwan Issa, and Gaza's new Hamas political leader, [Yahya Sinwar](#) who was released as part of the 2011 prisoner swap. Given the new title, "liaison between the military and political wing," the real meaning is that of the de facto head of the military wing. Deif still holds the title of commander in name, by virtue of his past glory so, if nothing else, he remains the soul of Palestinian resistance.

Without Hamas and the military tactics of Mohammed Deif, the political goals of Gaza

autonomy would not have been able to stare the Israeli war criminals squarely right between the eyes at the negotiation table in post-war 2014. Yes, the Israelis and their worldwide minions have, for the moment, flipped over that table. However, history applied to systemic oppression and genocide has always had only one predictable result: An animal-even man- when beaten, cornered, and threatened with guaranteed death for him and his family, has only one possible and remaining reluctant choice...to fight!

Palestine no longer has any other choice. But, now that history and the facts that are Gaza and Palestine become again a hidden reality, where is that man, the man who almost gave his life for Palestine and its people six times. His body may be waning, but his soul remains in the minds of all of Palestine, its people, its soldiers, its refugees, its flagging politicians..and their dreams of eventual freedom. A collective freedom that now demands the question from its own soul...

Where... is Mohammed Deif?

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Brett Redmayne-Titley has published over 150 in-depth articles over the past seven years for news agencies worldwide. Many have been translated. On-scene reporting from important current events has been an emphasis that has led to multi-part exposes on such topics as the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, NATO summit, KXL Pipeline, Porter Ranch Methane blow-out and many more. He can be reached at: live-on-scene@gmx.com. Prior articles can be viewed at his archive: www.watchingromeburn.uk

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