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## **Security and Geopolitical Concerns in the Middle East after the Martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh: the Political Leader of Hamas**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to analyze the conflict between Palestine and Israel, particularly following the martyrdom of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. The transition in leadership within Hamas may lead to significant strategic shifts in the group's operations. Employing a qualitative approach and a literature review method, this research will explore relevant literature and incorporate geopolitical perspectives to assess the impact of Ismail Haniyeh's martyrdom on Middle Eastern security and its implications for regional and international stability.

Despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) instructing Israel to prevent genocide against Palestinian civilians and address the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, Israel continues to carry out attacks and killings in densely populated areas. International pressure, including from the United Nations, appears ineffective in curbing Israel's military aggression. Israel's inhumane treatment of Palestinians is not a new issue but has been a recurring problem. Therefore, given the aforementioned facts and realities, it is appropriate for countries around the world, including Iran, to adopt a firmer stance against Israel's arrogance and brutality towards Palestinian sovereignty and the geopolitical security of the Middle East.

**Keywords: Geopolitic, Security, Martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh**

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konflik antara Palestina dan Israel, khususnya setelah wafatnya pemimpin Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh. Pergantian kepemimpinan di dalam Hamas dapat menyebabkan perubahan strategis yang signifikan dalam operasi kelompok tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode tinjauan pustaka, penelitian ini akan mengeksplorasi literatur yang relevan dan menggabungkan perspektif geopolitik untuk menilai dampak wafatnya Ismail Haniyeh

terhadap keamanan di Timur Tengah serta implikasinya bagi stabilitas regional dan internasional.

Meskipun Mahkamah Internasional (ICJ) telah menginstruksikan Israel untuk mencegah genosida terhadap warga sipil Palestina dan menangani krisis kemanusiaan di Jalur Gaza, Israel terus melakukan serangan dan pembunuhan di daerah yang padat penduduk. Tekanan internasional, termasuk dari Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa, tampaknya tidak efektif dalam mengekang agresi militer Israel. Perlakuan tidak manusiawi Israel terhadap warga Palestina bukanlah masalah baru, tetapi telah menjadi masalah yang berulang. Oleh karena itu, mengingat fakta dan realitas yang disebutkan di atas, sudah sepatutnya bagi negara-negara di seluruh dunia, termasuk Iran, untuk mengambil sikap yang lebih tegas terhadap arogansi dan kebrutalan Israel terhadap kedaulatan Palestina dan keamanan geopolitik di Timur Tengah.

**Keywords: Geopolitik, Keamanan, Kesyahidan Ismail Haniyeh.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

For more than a century, especially after World War II, the Middle East has been recognized as a significant center of conflict and crises. In the 21st century, this region has been particularly associated with conflict and terrorism. The area has faced various types of conflicts, including persistent regional disputes, short-term inter-regional clashes, internal unrest, escalating terrorist threats, and externally imposed wars. These conflicts have involved both state actors and ethnic groups at all levels. Notably, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has significantly shaped the political dynamics of the Middle East for several decades (Edwards, 2011).

Moreover, the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1917 led to uncontrollable security issues in the Middle East, particularly with the establishment of the State of Israel, which began with the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. The Balfour Declaration was a promise by the British government to the Jewish people, allowing the establishment of a homeland for them in Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration, named after its author, Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour, was addressed to Lord (Lionel) Rothschild, the honorary president of the Zionist Federation in Britain and Ireland. The declaration stated that Arthur James Balfour, on behalf of the British government, was pleased with the aspirations of the Zionist movement, which had been endorsed by the British Cabinet. The British government gave positive support to the establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine and committed to facilitating this effort.

The Balfour Declaration was issued following a request by a British Jew named Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann, who had significantly contributed to the war effort by developing a formula for weapons, was rewarded by David Lloyd George (Cleveland, 2004, p. 243). Weizmann sought a homeland for the Jewish people, and the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, offered the land of Uganda in Africa to the Jewish community. However, Weizmann rejected this offer, insisting that Palestine should be

the "home" for the Jewish people. This request was made under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which placed Palestine under British control following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, Chaim Weizmann's request was accepted by David Lloyd George (Cleveland, 2004).

Meanwhile, the Palestinian conflict, which has lasted for over seven decades, has also been influenced by regional dynamics following the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring led to regime changes in countries that were previously strong supporters of Palestine, such as Egypt. Regional instability and political changes in neighboring countries have impacted Palestine's strategy and stance in the struggle for independence. The shift in U.S. policy toward Israel under the Trump administration, which favored Israel's interests, has added to the complexity of the situation in Palestine. In this context, this paper aims to analyze the impact of Israel's presence on the geopolitical security of the Middle East, with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Using a qualitative approach and literature review method, this research examines relevant literature and integrates geopolitical perspectives to understand the impact of the Arab Spring on Middle Eastern security and its implications for regional and international stability.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the field of research, literature is highly valuable and plays a crucial role in providing context and meaning to the ongoing writing process. Through this literature review, researchers can clearly articulate, and readers can understand, why the subject under investigation is indeed a significant issue that warrants further examination. This applies to both the subject of study and the research environment, including the connections between this study and other relevant research.

Since the establishment of Israel, the country has been involved in a series of wars and conflicts, including the Arab-Israeli War in 1948, the Six-Day War in 1967, the Yom Kippur War in 1973, and many other conflicts and military operations. These conflicts have not only shaped Israel's foreign and security policies but have also impacted the overall stability of the Middle East.

The geopolitical landscape of the Middle East has long been shaped by the complex interactions of various regional and international actors, with Israel playing a central role. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and its subsequent conflicts with neighboring Arab countries have significantly influenced the region's security dynamics.

In a study by Mohammad Reza Maleki and Parzadeh Mohammad Zadeh Ebrahimi titled "The Middle East Peace Perspective in the Shadow of Normalization of Relations between Israel and the Arab World," the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is described as one of the most complex international crises, rooted in more than a century of historical tension, affecting the sensitive region of the Middle East. Despite numerous efforts by individuals, institutions, and countries to achieve comprehensive peace between the conflicting parties, a final resolution has yet to be reached.

This paper examines this ongoing conflict from the perspective of neorealism theory, employing a descriptive-analytical approach and library sources. It explores why Israel and several Arab countries have moved towards normalizing their relations—a

significant development that has altered regional dynamics and sparked debates about a new Middle East. Key factors facilitating the strengthening of Israel-Arab relations include shared security concerns and the pursuit of national interests. Additionally, the study highlights the significant role of the United States in this conflict and addresses the differing security perspectives of the involved parties.

In a study conducted by Mohammad Baqer Khoramshad titled "Factors Influencing the Formation of Israel's Foreign and Security Policy in the Middle East Security Complex," it was found that Israel's foreign policy is heavily influenced by the geopolitical and security conditions prevailing in the Middle East. The regime's objectives include seeking legitimacy, reducing regional public pressure, weakening the resistance axis, and promoting pro-Western governments in the region.

The study shows that Israel's foreign policy has two aspects. Domestically and internationally, Israel exhibits characteristics of violence, expansionism, structural crises, and limitations. On one hand, Israel's expansionist approach involves continuous engagement in regional wars and conflicts to reinforce and expand its territorial borders, power, and security. On the other hand, Israel faces one of the most insecure security environments.

The tense regional environment, coupled with Israel's strategic alliance with the United States and the economic and political support from this ally, is a vital element in understanding Israel's foreign policy. The study reveals that Israel's strategy to address regional challenges—such as the growing influence of the resistance axis, the presence of Arab enemies, and the role of international powers—has led to an overtly aggressive and military-focused policy. This research identifies the key factors influencing the formation of Israel's foreign policy within the Middle East security complex.

Another study by Fadile Inas Pratwi and colleagues on "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Beyond Settlement: A Critical Assessment" found that despite numerous attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both parties have largely exhibited a lack of compromise and commitment. This paper aims to analyze the underlying reasons behind the many unsuccessful attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The paper argues that four fundamental issues are the subject of negotiation in every attempt: borders, security, Jerusalem, and refugees. The paper evaluates each party's positions on these four issues and how they shape the negotiation process. This work is conducted through empirical generalization using inductive methodology and library studies as a data collection method. The paper concludes that a shift in internal policies on both sides is necessary for future settlements to be possible.

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative approach utilizing literature review methods. Data is gathered from various secondary sources, including books, journal articles, reports from international organizations, and reputable media outlets. The analysis involves examining relevant literature and integrating geopolitical perspectives to understand the impact of Israel's presence on security in the Middle East, particularly concerning long-term conflicts and their implications for international attention.

The research focuses on understanding the factors that influence regional dynamics. The research question analyzes the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on potential conflict scenarios and its effects on the stability of the Middle East. The aim of this study is to explore the various factors that may affect these dynamics and to provide a comprehensive overview of potential risks and possible scenarios that may arise.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, while attending the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new president, has garnered significant international media attention. The implications of this event have sparked widespread speculation due to Haniyeh's prominence as a key figure in Palestine and his efforts to establish it as a recognized independent state. As the political leader of Hamas, Haniyeh played a crucial role in shaping the group's strategy and managing its international relations, particularly with regional countries. Under his leadership, Hamas became a major player in the armed struggle against Israel, engaging in a series of complex conflicts and negotiations (Landler & Rubin, 2021). Haniyeh's ability to mobilize both domestic and international support ensured that Hamas remained a significant force in Palestinian politics and in the conflict with Israel.

In the realm of international relations, Haniyeh sought to strengthen strategic alliances with Arab countries and other Middle Eastern nations. Furthermore, he consistently campaigned against Israeli dominance, attempting to expand his influence in the Middle East and secure financial support and cooperation from several regional countries (Landler & Rubin, 2021). Haniyeh's skill in maintaining and developing these relationships was highly impactful and played a fundamental role in shaping Hamas's power and strategy in the conflict.

Haniyeh actively engaged with and coordinated among various Middle Eastern leaders, ensuring that the support provided not only continued but also increased in alignment with Hamas's strategic needs. He played a pivotal role in directing political and military dynamics and effectively utilized Iranian support to achieve Palestine's strategic objectives.

This raises the question: Who is Ismail Haniyeh? Born in the Al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza, Haniyeh belongs to a younger generation of Palestinians nurtured by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, particularly during his education at the Islamic University of Gaza. He earned a bachelor's degree in Arabic literature from the Islamic University of Gaza. In 1989, he was arrested by Israeli forces without clear reasons. In 1992, he was released and immediately exiled to northern Lebanon along with other Hamas activists, including Rantisi. A year later, Haniyeh was appointed as the head of the Islamic University of Gaza.

Haniyeh's position within Hamas was strengthened due to his outstanding leadership skills and close association with Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. This made him a target for Israeli attacks aimed at eliminating top Hamas leaders. In 2003, he was injured in an Israeli attack but survived. In December 2005, he was selected as Hamas's leader for the Palestinian legislative elections held on January 25, 2006. Hamas's victory in the

legislative elections led to his appointment as the Prime Minister of Palestine on February 20, 2006, by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Although Abbas eventually dissolved Haniyeh's cabinet and replaced it with Salam Fayyad's government, Haniyeh persisted and continued to control the Gaza Strip, Hamas's main stronghold.

In this context, Israel, with its vested interests in the Middle East, has managed to increase its influence through Jewish lobbies (at the forefront of international Zionism) to the extent that all domestic and foreign decision-making processes are under their full supervision. They play a significant role in influencing Congress, the White House, think tanks, and other influential centers in the decision-making process. The question arises regarding the role of Jewish lobbies in the U.S. decision-making process and foreign policy support for the Zionist regime.

Israel, through various efforts, seeks to achieve its goals using methods such as financially supporting congressional candidates and influencing academic circles, with the aim of controlling the executive branch and presidency through media and promotional pressure. It should be noted that the shift in U.S. policy toward supporting Israel reflects the global influence and power that Jews wield through the U.S. government. They compel others to fight and die for their interests. Therefore, it is important to examine how the weaknesses and backwardness of Muslims and Middle Eastern societies relate to Israel's interests in the region.

On the other hand, in the United States, interest groups operate at all levels, including national, state, sectional, urban, and regional. In addition to the legislative and executive branches, interest groups also seek to influence the judiciary. It is clear that interest groups are a very important part of politics and governance in the United States. One of the most significant interest groups in the United States is the American Jewish lobby. Despite the diversity of interest groups in American politics, the American Jewish lobby holds a special position due to its power and effectiveness in shaping U.S. foreign policy outcomes (Sabeti, 2006, p. 34).

Key players in this context include presidents, high-ranking political officials, and former Secretaries of State (such as Clinton and Kissinger), wealthy individuals, owners of large economic corporations, the media, cultural institutions, and organizations such as interest groups, think tanks, foreign policy institutes, major universities, mass media, churches and religious institutions, ethnic minorities, labor unions, and formal and informal lobbying companies (Kadkhodaei & Shafiei Sarvestani, 2011, p. 117). These institutions, comprising over a thousand lobbying companies, actively participate in foreign policy through think tanks, trade associations, financial, economic, and commercial institutions, Hollywood, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Human Rights Watch, Friends of the Earth, and women's associations.

The reality is that in the United States, lobbying does not carry a negative connotation and is not associated with illegal or underground activities. Political power in the United States is more decentralized and distributed than in other countries. The law does not prohibit lobbying; rather, it regulates it and recognizes it as a means of pursuing one's interests.

In the context of U.S. foreign and domestic policy decision-making, Jewish lobbying groups play a crucial role and are often involved in what is known as "petitioning" or bargaining. This enables influential organizations and powerful entities to guide the complex and intricate processes of political decision-making. Considering that Jews comprise only 3% to 5% of the U.S. population, their substantial investment in capital and extensive use of media and political power has had a significant impact on policymaking. Jewish lobbying groups invest their intellectual and financial resources in shaping public opinion, mobilizing voting power, and forming political lobbies. They also establish think tanks that provide academic research and doctrinal guidance. This influence ensures the success of powerful interest groups and their ability to shape domestic and foreign policies in the United States (Sadeghi Hosseini & Alireza Naeiji, 2022).

## **DISCUSSION**

The assassination of Haniyeh and the transition of leadership in Hamas could lead to heightened tensions in the Middle East. Israel, which views Iran as a major strategic threat, may respond to this change by increasing its military preparedness and strategy. Israel has long focused on efforts to isolate and weaken Iran and its supporters, such as Hamas (Katz, 2023).

The assassination of Haniyeh and the leadership transition in Hamas could lead to significant strategic changes in the group's operations. Haniyeh was known for steering the resistance strategy against Israel and maintaining close relations with regional countries. With his death, it is possible that Hamas's new leader may bring different views and approaches, whether in terms of the intensity of the conflict with Israel or in relations with Iran.

Israel has long viewed Ismail Haniyeh as a major strategic threat, particularly due to his support for countries like Iran, Lebanon, and Syria. Israel feels threatened by Iran's regional ambitions to expand its influence and challenge its dominance. In this context, any change in Hamas leadership that could alter the balance of support or strategy in the conflict with Israel may impact Israel's stance and policies.

If Hamas's new leader adopts a more aggressive stance toward Israel or if Middle Eastern countries increase their support for Hamas, the risk of a direct confrontation between Palestine, backed by several regional countries, and Israel may increase. This situation could lead to heightened military and diplomatic tensions, potentially disrupting the overall stability of the Middle East. The potential for escalation should be examined within the broader context of the policies of other major regional countries.

Despite being geopolitically advantageous with the support of various transnational groups, Palestine and Hamas have yet to succeed in pressuring Israel, whether diplomatically or through military attacks. This is primarily due to the extensive and overwhelming support from the United States, both diplomatically (through the United Nations) and militarily. Although geographically distant from the Middle East, the United States is considered a military power in the region. The U.S. has numerous military bases in the Middle East, including in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Israel.

An interesting aspect for further analysis is that amidst the high tensions between Hamas and Israel, Ismail Haniyeh was martyred by a missile likely fired by Israel. The question is whether the international community, particularly the United States, will merely observe this event or whether Iran will feel compelled to act, given that Haniyeh was martyred in the heart of Iran's capital.

The increasing arrogance and human rights violations by Israel are becoming more apparent, even in the face of a temporary ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) requiring Israel to prevent genocide against Palestinian civilians and improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. In reality, Israel continues its attacks and killings in densely populated civilian areas. International pressures, including those from the United Nations, seem unable to halt Israel's military brutality. Israel's inhumane actions against Palestinians are not new but have occurred repeatedly. Therefore, given the mentioned realities, it is only appropriate for countries around the world, including Iran, to take a firmer stance against Israel's arrogance and brutality concerning Palestine's sovereignty and the geopolitical security of the Middle East.

## **CONCLUSION**

The assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran has sparked widespread speculation due to his significant role in Palestine and his efforts to gain recognition for an independent Palestinian state. Haniyeh played a crucial role in developing Hamas's strategy and managing its international relations, particularly with neighboring countries. He actively sought to strengthen strategic alliances with Arab nations and other Middle Eastern countries, campaigned against Israeli dominance, and secured financial and cooperative support from these nations. Haniyeh maintained active communication and coordination with Middle Eastern leaders, effectively leveraging their support to achieve Hamas's strategic objectives.

Born in the al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza, Haniyeh earned his bachelor's degree in Arabic literature from the Islamic University of Gaza. He was arrested by Israeli forces in 1989 and released in 1992. His leadership within Hamas was bolstered by his leadership abilities and close connection with Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. He was elected as the leader of Hamas during the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections and also served as the Prime Minister of Palestine. The shift in U.S. policy toward increased support for Israel reflects the global influence of Jewish communities, which compel others to align with their interests.

The increasing visibility of Israel's human rights violations, despite a provisional ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) obligating Israel to prevent genocide against Palestinian civilians and improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza, highlights ongoing concerns. Israel continues its attacks and killings in densely populated civilian areas. International pressures, including those from the United Nations, seem incapable of halting Israel's military brutality. These inhumane actions against Palestinians are not new but have occurred repeatedly. Therefore, given these realities, it is only fitting that the global community, including Iran, takes a stronger stance against Israel's arrogance and brutality concerning Palestinian sovereignty and the geopolitical security of the Middle East.



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