

Khalil al-Hayya Elected to Chair Hamas political bureau – Insights and Reactions

Dr. Igal Shiri, Dr. Hayim Iserovich, Elad Drori

July 22, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ On July 20, 2026, Hamas announced that Khalil al-Hayya had been elected as the new chairman of the political bureau, after the position had remained vacant since the elimination of Yahya al-Sinwar in October 2024. He defeated the leader of Hamas abroad, Khaled Mashaal, by a narrow margin.
- ▶ Hamas reported the completion of the voting process despite the "complex circumstances" and declared that all members of the movement and its institutions stood behind al-Hayya to focus on "stopping the aggression against the Palestinians." Khaled Mashaal also wished al-Hayya success and said he respected the results of the election.
- ▶ The various Palestinian terrorist organizations congratulated al-Hayya, who also received a congratulatory telephone call from Hussein al-Sheikh, the Palestinian Authority deputy chairman. Iran and the members of the "resistance axis" also congratulated al-Hayya's and declared it was "proof of the victory of the resistance."
- ▶ Al-Hayya, a native of Gaza City, joined Hamas when it was established in 1987 and was chairman of the movement's faction in the Palestinian National Council. He had been Yahya al-Sinwar's deputy in the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip since 2017 and, following al-Sinwar's elimination, became Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ Al-Hayya was a member of the Hamas delegations which conducted indirect negotiations with Israel over hostage deals and has headed the negotiating team since the outbreak of the war following the October 7, 2023 terrorist invasion and massacre. He also survived several attempts to kill him and four of his sons died in Israeli strikes.
- ▶ In speeches and interviews, al-Hayya has consistently supported continuing the "armed resistance," rejected the disarmament of Hamas and advocated strengthening ties with Iran, while being prepared to promote ceasefires, prisoner exchange agreements and political

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

arrangements under conditions that would ensure the continuation of the movement's position.

► **In the assessment of the Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute, al-Hayya's election shows that the Hamas leadership and the military wing in the Gaza Strip have retained their dominance at the expense of the external leadership headed by Mashaal. Al-Hayya is expected to continue al-Sinwar's ideological line, especially "resistance" and rejection of concessions regarding Hamas disarmament, while maintaining close relations with Iran and a strategic partnership with Qatar and Turkey. Al-Hayya's election is also expected to prevent an internal Hamas organizational upheaval and indicates that so far the movement wants to concentrate on restoration and the continuity of al-Sinwar's legacy rather than a strategic change, while coping with the consequences of the war in the Gaza Strip and preparing for the possibility of elections for the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian National Council.**



Khalil al-Hayya (Palestinian Media Center, March 11, 2021)

The Election

► No new chairman was appointed to the Hamas political bureau after the elimination of Yahya al-Sinwar on October 16, 2024. Instead, a joint five-member leadership council was appointed to manage the movement until the elections which were originally scheduled for March 2025. The members of the council were the head of the Shura Council, Muhammad Darwish; the acting head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Hayya; the leader of Hamas abroad, Khaled Mashaal; the leader of Hamas in Judea and Samaria, Zaher Jabarin; and the secretary of the political bureau, Nizar Awadallah (Agence France-Presse, October 21, 2024; al-Sharq news website, October 21, 2024).

► However, the continuation of the war in the Gaza Strip postponed the elections. Only after the ceasefire in October 2025 were there reports that the leadership elections would take place in January 2026, but they were postponed again to an unspecified date because of the focus

on negotiations over the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the war between Iran and Israel and the United States (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 11 and March 22, 2026).

► In May 2026, Hamas announced that a first round of voting for the position of political bureau chairman had been held, but no candidate had received a decisive result and a second round of voting would be held at a later date (Hamas Telegram channel, May 16, 2026). The identities of the candidates or the degree of their support were not made public, but according to a report, the only two candidates were the head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Hayya, and the leader of Hamas abroad, Khaled Mashaal (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 16, 2026). Hamas sources stated that blank ballots had been cast for the first time in the elections, to protest the movement's policies, in favor of a desire for younger leadership, opposition to the election of an interim leader and a preference to wait for general elections (*Asharq al-Awsat*, May 19, 2026).

► It was also reported that the three heads of Hamas regional bureaus had been re-elected to their positions: Khalil al-Hayya in the Gaza Strip, Khaled Mashaal as head of Hamas abroad and Zaher Jabarin in Judea and Samaria (*al-Akhbar*, May 4, 2026).

► In June 2026, the elections for the chairmanship of the political bureau reportedly resumed under strict secrecy to prevent security breaches or media leaks. Votes would be cast by secret ballot using envelopes or sealed letters delivered to eligible voters. The completed ballots would then be returned in accordance with the security measures to protect the individuals or bodies responsible for the election process (*Asharq al-Awsat*, June 16, 2026).

► On July 20, 2026, Hamas announced the election of Khalil al-Hayya as chairman of the political bureau, following an internal election in which representatives from the movement's various arenas and areas of activity participated, including the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, Israeli prisons and beyond the Palestinian territories, through an institutional consultation process. Hamas also claimed to have achieved a "milestone" despite the "extremely complex security and political circumstances," claiming it was confirmation that Hamas was governed by its institutions and councils and adhered to its "systems and procedures" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).



The five Hamas political bureau chairman since its establishment, Khalil al-Hayya at the left (Al Jazeera "Palestine," July 20, 2026)

► According to a report, al-Hayya received 35 votes compared to 34 for Mashaal (aljazeera.net, July 20, 2026). Another report stated that al-Hayya received 36 votes from the 69 members of Hamas general Shura council, while Mashaal received 32 votes, with one blank ballot (al-Sharq Agency, July 21, 2026).



One of the sessions of Hamas internal election process, at the conclusion of which Khalil al-Hayya was elected (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 20, 2026)

► In the announcement of al-Hayya's election, Hamas' institutions said they "pray to Allah to grant him success, guidance and support" in meeting his responsibilities. It added that the movement, with all its members, leaders and institutions, stood united behind the elected leadership to continue fulfilling its "national and jihadist duty." It also claimed all the movement's "eyes, hands and hearts" were now focused on stopping the "ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

► Khaled Mashaal sent his "sincere congratulations and best wishes" to his "dear brother" al-Hayya on winning the confidence of the Shura council. He wished him success and strength "during this critical period." Mashaal said he had made it clear to the members of the Shura council that he would respect the election results and that he, together with all the members of the movement, would stand behind al-Hayya's leadership from that moment onward and

were committed to working with him and all the movement's officeholders "in a spirit of brotherhood and integration, for the sake of our people and our cause."² He added that the "complex period" required them to unite in the service of the Palestinian people, adding, "Together, on the path of freedom, resistance to the occupation and the fulfillment of our people's aspirations for freedom, return and independence" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 21, 2026).

► The leader of Hamas in Judea and Samaria, Zaher Jabarin, congratulated al-Hayya on winning the confidence of the Shura council and on the responsibility he had taken upon himself "at this critical and sensitive juncture." He congratulated Mashaal and praised his contributions to leading the movement and serving "its jihadist mission." Jabarin affirmed the movement's full support for al-Hayya and pledged Hamas would remain united in the face of "the challenges and dangers confronting our cause." He added that the sacrifices made by the Gazans and the "aggression and settlement activities" in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem were a great responsibility for the Hamas leadership, and required the highest levels of solidarity and unity (Hamas Telegram channel, July 21, 2026).

► Hamas sources stated that no significant changes in the composition of the leadership were expected. Ali al-Amoudi, who is currently chairman of the Gaza region, is expected to be appointed head of Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip; Zaher Jabarin is expected to remain head of the Hamas office responsible for Judea and Samaria; Muhammad Darwish is expected to remain chairman of the Shura council; and Mashaal is expected to continue heading the external leadership. According to the report, al-Hayya had almost unanimous support in the Gaza Strip, particularly from the military wing (Khabar Ajel Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

Reaction to al-Hayya's Win

The Palestinians

► The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) congratulated Hamas on the election of Khalil al-Hayya as chairman of the movement's political bureau. The statement emphasized that "the success of our brothers in Hamas in holding internal elections and filling the position of political bureau chairman after the killing of Yahya al-Sinwar, despite the difficult circumstances and the ongoing Israeli attacks, conveys a message to Israel that Hamas remains strong and united, and

² The destruction of the State of Israel.

it has failed to undermine its determination, willpower and steadfastness." The PIJ wished al-Hayya and "our brothers in Hamas" success in continuing their activity to achieve the Palestinian people's goals of "liberation, return and the removal of the occupation" (PIJ Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

► Hussein al-Sheikh, Palestinian Authority (PA) deputy chairman, spoke with al-Hayya by telephone and wished him success. Al-Hayya said he would continue to serve the Palestinian people and their "just cause," and uphold and defend the "fundamental principles." He said he was determined to defend the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and all arenas, and to cooperate with all leaders of the Palestinian people in order to "achieve Palestinian unity in the face of the dangers threatening the Palestinians and their cause" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

► Jamil Mazher, the deputy secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), spoke with al-Hayya to congratulate him. Mazher said Hamas' determination to elect a chairman to its political bureau reflected its "vitality and ability to renew itself," and its determination to continue on the path of its "struggle" despite the "complex circumstances and looming dangers." He said he had confidence in the new leadership's ability to continue along the path of the "national struggle" along with all the Palestinian forces³ until the goals of "return, freedom and independence" were achieved. They noted the need to intensify joint national efforts among the various "forces and factions" to strengthen Palestinian steadfastness, and to make efforts to stop "the war, alleviate the suffering of Gazans and stop the occupation's plans in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem." They said achieving national unity was a strategic necessity for confronting the plans of the "occupation" and defending "legitimate rights" (PFLP website, July 20, 2026).

► The Palestinian Mujahideen Movement congratulated Hamas on successfully electing its leadership in view of the serious challenges facing the Palestinian people, and noted that the election was a message of strength and steadfastness, as well as "defiance of Israel, which sought, through its continued targeting of leaders and national symbols, to create a leadership vacuum and cause internal confusion within Hamas and among the 'resistance' organizations in general." It added that Hamas had once again demonstrated its organizational cohesion, its ability to overcome crises and difficulties and its continued fulfillment of its national role and

³ Terrorist organizations.

its role within the ranks of the "resistance" (Palestinian Mujahideen Movement Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

► Al-Hayya also received congratulatory telephone calls from the head of Fatah's Democratic Reform Current, Muhammad Dahlan; Fatah Central Committee member Jibril al-Rajoub; and the secretary general of the Palestinian People's Party, Bassam al-Salhi. Reportedly, al-Hayya told them all that achieving national unity was the leadership's top priority, and they would work to realize it in the near future (Hamas Telegram channel, July 21, 2026).

Iran and the "Resistance Axis"⁴

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called al-Hayya's election an achievement for the Palestinian "resistance" movement. He said holding the internal elections under the difficult conditions of "siege and the Zionist occupation regime" were a tremendous success. He added that Iran would continue to support the Palestinian people "in their legitimate struggle to free themselves from the occupation of the Zionist regime" (Tasnim, July 21, 2026).

► The commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Qods Force, Esmail Qaani, congratulated al-Hayya and "the prominent figures in the movement and all the fighters of this immense current Islamic resistance." He said the election of a figure who was "a symbol of resistance and martyrdom" showed that Hamas remained committed to the "path of Islamic resistance." Qaani said "the Zionist enemy must understand that it has failed to stop the resistance... [and it] was "stronger than ever" (al-Manar, July 20, 2026).

► Hezbollah congratulated Khalil al-Hayya and the "brothers" in Hamas on his election as political bureau chairman. Hezbollah said that "these elections send a message to the Zionist enemy and its supporters, and to all those who bet on the elimination of the Palestinian resistance, that Hamas still exists, is strong and united, and will continue on its path despite all the assassinations and attempts to break its willpower and that of the Palestinians, and that the banner of 'resistance,' which the enemy seeks to bring down, will continue to fly high, carried by loyal people who safeguard the trust and continue the journey with faith, determination and steadfastness." Hezbollah wished al-Hayya great success "in assuming its great responsibility and carrying the trust left by the leaders who were killed" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

⁴ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem also congratulated al-Hayya on his election "under the difficult circumstances of Israeli-American aggression" and called it "an expression of steadfastness, determination and the will to keep the flame of resistance burning, to which Hamas, as its most prominent and devoted faction, is committed for the loftiest cause of our time: liberating Jerusalem and 'Palestine' from the Israeli entity." Qassem added that al-Hayya's leadership was a continuation of the legacy of the shaheeds among Hamas previous leaders and all the leaders of the jihad fighters, Hamas members and the Palestinian people. He said Hezbollah and the "Islamic resistance" stood with Hamas and supported the struggle "to restore the land and the rights," as determined by the previous secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, and in accordance with the vision of Iran's leaders. Qassem added that although three years had passed since the beginning of operation al-Aqsa Flood, "the enemy has failed to achieve its goals, which are extermination, ending the resistance and the surrender of the resistance" (al-'Ahed, July 21, 2026).



Al-Hayya meets with Nasrallah (Shehab Agency, November 22, 2023)

► The Houthi political bureau congratulated Hamas on al-Hayya's election, expressing confidence that the election "will increase the brilliance [*sic*], strength and resilience of the Palestinian resistance, since al-Hayya is among the Palestinian jihad-fighting leaders who emerged from the suffering, pain and aspirations of the Palestinian people." It added that by electing al-Hayya, Hamas had demonstrated that "the Palestinian resistance cannot be broken and that the Israeli enemy's objectives of eliminating the resistance have failed." It said the Houthi movement stood with the Palestinian people and their "just cause," and the Islamic nation had a responsibility to support "the steadfastness and resistance of the Palestinian people in view of the continued Israeli siege imposed on the oppressed Palestinian people" (Houthi Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

► Kataib Hezbollah in Iraq congratulated the Hamas movement on al-Hayya's election, calling it a "painful blow" to the enemies of the Palestinian people and demonstrating that "the

resistance movements will continue as an inexhaustible source and an unquenchable flame on the path to victory" (Kataib Hezbollah Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

Other Reactions

► The Egyptian minister of general intelligence, Major General Hassan Rashad, telephoned al-Hayya and congratulated him on the confidence he had received and on his election as leader of the movement. Al-Hayya thanked him and noted the continuation of the historic relationship with Egypt and its role in the Palestinian cause, particularly in the ongoing negotiations to consolidate the ceasefire and complete its second phase. He said, "The movement will continue to work with the brothers in Egypt, Qatar and Turkey to ensure the success of their efforts, end the suffering of Gazans and achieve withdrawal and reconstruction" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

► The head of Turkish intelligence, Ibrahim Kalin, telephoned al-Hayya and congratulated him on the vote of confidence he had received and on his election. Kalin reiterated Turkey's support for the Palestinian people "and their just rights." Al-Hayya thanked Turkey for its positions and their strong bilateral relations, and noted the continuation of communication and consultations for achieving "the goals and aspirations of our people" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 21, 2026).

► The Muslim Brotherhood movement issued a statement signed by the acting general guide, Dr. Salah Abd al-Haq, congratulating Hamas on the successful conclusion of the voting with the election of Khalil al-Hayya. The Muslim Brotherhood said it reflected the cohesion of the movement's institutions and its ability to renew its leadership against the background of the "ongoing Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people." The movement said it supported al-Hayya "at this decisive stage in the history of the struggle against Zionism," and called on Allah to grant him and his brothers in the leadership success and guidance in achieving the movement's objectives (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 20, 2026).

Portrait of Khalil al-Hayya

► Khalil Ismail Ibrahim al-Hayya, aka Abu Osama, was born in 1960 in the al-Shuja'ia neighborhood in eastern Gaza. He is married and has seven children.



Al-Hayya (second from left) with Yahya al-Sinwar (October 14, 2014)

► Al-Hayya studied at the Hittin, Hashim bin Abd Manaf and Yaffa schools in the Gaza Strip. In 1983, he received a BA in the fundamentals of religion from the Islamic University of Gaza. In 1986, he completed a MA in Sunnah and Hadith sciences at the University of Jordan, and in 1997 he received a PhD in Sunnah and Hadith sciences from the Holy Quran and Islamic Sciences University in Khartoum.

► He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1980s while studying at the Islamic University and was prominent in the movement's student faction, serving as deputy chairman of the university's student council. He also lectured in the fundamentals of religion faculty at the Islamic University of Gaza, and was later appointed assistant dean for student affairs and dean of student affairs in 2001.

► In 1980, he was detained by the Israeli security forces for a month and a half, and in 1982 he was imprisoned for one week. He also participated in the first intifada, and was detained in 1991 for three years because of his activities at the university and in the Islamic movement in Gaza.

► He joined Hamas when it was established in 1987 and rose through the ranks until he was elected to the political bureau. In the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, he was elected on Hamas Change and Reform list, and the movement appointed him chairman of its parliamentary faction.

► He was a member of the Hamas delegation in the negotiations that led to the Gilad Shalit exchange deal in 2011, as well as a member of the Hamas delegation in the negotiations in Cairo following Operations Pillar of Defense in 2012 and Protective Edge in 2014, while acting as chairman of Hamas government media information bureau. In 2017, he was elected deputy to the chairman of Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Yahya al-Sinwar, and was re-elected in 2021. In addition, al-Hayya was chairman of Hamas office for Inter-Arab and Islamic relations.



Right: Al-Hayya with Iran's former leader, Ali Khamenei (Sawa Agency, February 8, 2025).

Left: Al-Hayya with Syria's former president, Bashar al-Assad (al-Manar, November 1, 2022)

► Since the war in the Gaza Strip which began with the Hamas terrorist invasion and massacre on October 7, 2023, al-Hayya has headed the Hamas delegation in the indirect negotiations with Israel and held direct talks with official representatives of the American administration. Following the elimination of al-Sinwar's in October 2024, al-Hayya served as the acting head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip and was one of the five members of Hamas leadership council.

► Al-Hayya survived several attempts to kill him, and four of his sons were killed in Israeli strikes:

- ◆ In 2007, seven members of al-Hayya's family were killed during an attempt to eliminate him. His son Hamza, who was an operative in the Hamas military wing, was killed in 2008 in an airstrike in the southern Gaza Strip while firing rockets at Israel. During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, al-Hayya's wife was seriously wounded and his son Osama, Osama's wife and three of their children were killed by IDF artillery fire targeting the family's house in the al-Shuja'iya neighborhood (Hamas website; Al Jazeera website, August 8, 2024).

- ◆ On September 9, 2025, al-Hayya survived the IDF attack on a Hamas leadership compound in Doha, Qatar. His son Humam, the director of al-Hayya's office, and three of

his escorts were killed in the strike (IDF and Israeli Security Agency Spokespersons; Hamas Telegram channel, September 9, 2025).⁵

◆ On May 6, 2026, his son Azzam was eliminated in an Israeli strike in Gaza City. The IDF stated that Azzam al-Hayya belonged to the *nukhba* unit of the Hamas military wing and had a central role in Hamas (IDF Spokesperson, May 13, 2026).



**Al-Hayya and his four sons who were eliminated by Israel
(Mish Heik Telegram channel, July 20, 2026)**

Quoted Remarks from Khalil al-Hayya

► Khalil al-Hayya has frequently expressed his opinions in speeches and interviews, consistently reflecting support for continuing the "armed resistance," rejection of Hamas disarmament and the strengthening of ties with Iran, along with a willingness to promote ceasefires, prisoner exchange agreements and political arrangements under conditions that would ensure the movement's continued position. The some of his more quoted remarks:

◆ During events marking Palestinian Prisoner's Day in 2015, al-Hayya declared that Hamas would continue to kidnap Israeli soldiers to exchange for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel (al-Alam TV, April 17, 2015).



**Al-Hayya during a ceremony marking the 27th anniversary of Hamas founding
(PalToday, December 15, 2014)**

⁵ See the September 2025 ITIC report, [Israel Attacks the Hamas Leadership in Doha](#).

- ◆ In February 2016, at the height of the wave of terrorist attacks in Israel, he said attempts to deflect the Palestinians from the path of "resistance" had failed, and Hamas would not abandon jihad or the "struggle" against Israel (Safa Agency, February 5, 2016).
- ◆ In a speech delivered during Eid al-Adha in 2016, he called for united efforts to continue the intifada and to keep "the fire burning" throughout the Palestinian territories. He also portrayed Israel as "the enemy of the Islamic nation" and as violating the sanctity of al-Aqsa Mosque (alresala.net, September 12, 2016).
- ◆ In a speech delivered at a rally in the northern Gaza Strip marking the anniversary of Hamas founding in 2016, he said that Hamas had succeeded in causing Israel to lose its strategic strength. **He called on Israel to prepare for "a serious blow" and threatened that Hamas would attack from every direction, over land, through tunnels, from the heart of the sea and from the air.** He also stated that Hamas supported the so-called knife intifada (the 2015-2016 wave of attacks) and called on everyone to participate (Al Jazeera, December 9, 2016).
- ◆ After the Israeli Knesset passed the Regulation Law to retroactively legalize Israeli construction on privately owned Palestinian land, he claimed it required the Palestinians to strengthen the "resistance plan" and the "Jerusalem Intifada," and claimed the struggle would ultimately lead to "Israel's defeat" (Quds.net, February 15, 2017).
- ◆ In response to American 2017 declaration recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, he called on the Palestinian people to take to the streets and said marked the beginning of a renewed intifada called Jerusalem's Freedom. He said it was a new phase requiring a new strategy to confront the United States decision (*Dunia al-Watan*, December 9, 2017).
- ◆ During the marches of "return" and the clashes along the Gaza Strip border in 2019, he said Palestinians weapons would be aimed at Israel until they succeeded in reaching Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque. He said the real enemy was Israel and the Palestinians were prepared to continue the path of the intifada and the marches until the "siege" was lifted (al-Aqsa, September 28, 2018).
- ◆ In response to the American "deal of the century" (the normalization between Israel and Arab states) in 2020, he said that the "resistance" had prepared its equipment and readied its army to "fight the occupation and expel it from Palestine" (al-Aqsa, January 31, 2020).

◆ During Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021, al-Hayya said in a recorded speech that Israel had encountered a "resistance" capable of standing up to it. He said Israel had failed to achieve a "victory image" and "the resistance turned its cities into ruins." He urged the Gazans to remain strong and promised Hamas would stand by them, rebuild the destruction and establish a Palestinian state. He stated that "we have triumphed for Jerusalem, for al-Aqsa, for the holy places and for the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood" (al-Aqsa channel, May 17, 2021). After the operation ended, he thanked Iran and stated that Iran had stood along with the "Palestinian resistance" with all its capabilities, and Iran's political, financial and military support had continued even after Hamas left Syria in 2011 (Al Jazeera, March 19, 2023).

◆ Shortly after the October 7, 2023 terrorist invasion and massacre, while serving as Hamas representative in the indirect negotiations, he accused Israel of using the civilian hostages and those holding dual citizenship "in an immoral manner." He claimed they had been on the verge of an agreement to release Israeli and foreign civilians, but Israel had returned to square one, creating obstacles every day and avoiding progress by telling each mediator something different (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, November 5, 2023).

◆ He accompanied Isma'il Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau, on the visit to Iran during which Haniyeh was eliminated on July 30, 2024. The following day, he held a press conference in Tehran and said the first reason Haniyeh had been killed was that since the beginning of operation al-Aqsa Flood Israel had sought to isolate the "resistance," but had been surprised that Haniyeh continued visiting capitals around the world, and that by killing him Israel sought to vent the anger that had built up because of its failure to isolate the "resistance." He added that the second reason was that Israel "is challenging the world today and wants to set the entire region on fire. Therefore, it wanted to strike Lebanon and Iran, because it knows that Lebanon, Iran and the 'resistance' will not allow the event to pass without a response, and the 'resistance' and the al-Qassam Brigades will not allow it to pass without a response." He added that unless the hand that launched the missile at Haniyeh was severed, "the enemy" would continue elsewhere (Hamas website, July 31, 2024; al-Mayadeen TV, July 31, 2024).

◆ Following the elimination of Yahya al-Sinwar in October 2024, al-Hayya praised him as someone who had devoted his life to defending "Palestine" and the holy places, and said

that he had been a gifted commander who led the battle on the ground. He compared al-Sinwar to previous Hamas leaders, including Ahmed Yassin, Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi, Ibrahim al-Muqadmeh, Salah al-Arouri and Isma'il Haniyeh, who had led the movement until their deaths, and said Hamas would continue the "struggle" until the establishment of a Palestinian state "on all the land of 'Palestine,' with Jerusalem as its capital." He said the hostages would not return home unless the "occupation forces" withdrew from the Gaza Strip, the war ended and the Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli prisons (Sama Agency, October 18, 2024).

◆ In a speech delivered before the Arab National Conference held in Beirut, he said the objective of the October 7, 2023 terrorist invasion and massacre had been to declare that "without the rights of the Palestinian people, there will be no security or stability," and the region would not find peace unless a Palestinian state was established and the "right of return"⁶ implemented. In the speech, which was Hamas's closest expression to a declaration of "victory," al-Hayya boasted that October 7 had shown that "when the entire nation is united, Palestine can be liberated." He also warned that if the Islamic nation failed to seize the responsibility created by the attack and chart the path toward the "liberation of Palestine" and the establishment of a state, it would once again disappoint the Palestinian people (Hamas Telegram channel, November 7, 2025).



**Al-Hayya in a speech marking one year since the October 7, 2023 attack
(Hamas Telegram channel, October 6, 2024)**

◆ After the elimination of his son Azzam in May 2026, he accused Israel of habitually conducting negotiations with the Palestinians and others under fire. He said the attack on his son was a continuation of the attack on the Hamas delegation in Qatar in

⁶ The return of the Palestinian refugees and their descendants to their pre-1948 places of residence, that is, the destruction of the State of Israel.

September 2025. He said Hamas was negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians and the "resistance" in a way which would achieve their objectives, and that if Israel believed that by targeting leaders or their children and families it could obtain what the Palestinians refused to give and achieve its goals through killing, it was mistaken and had no chance of succeeding. He added that their compass was the interest of the Palestinian people and the achievement of their legitimate political objectives [*sic*], bringing stability and security and achieving what would enable the Palestinian people to remain on their land and in their homeland [*sic*] (Hamas Telegram channel, May 7, 2026).