

Opinion

Same old Hamas

Op-ed: The cosmetic changes to the Hamas Charter won't interfere with an Israeli peace initiative indicating that Israel is serious about making gradual progress toward an agreement with the Palestinians.

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In recent weeks, the Arab media have been releasing reports in dribs and drabs about an impending dramatic publication of the [amended Hamas Charter](#). Those expecting Hamas to recognize the State of Israel or waive the right of return for Palestinians will likely be disappointed: They won't find it here. The softened language and the ideological invigoration are for internal political purposes in the Palestinian arena, for foreign policy purposes vis-à-vis the Arab world, and for gaining international political legitimization.

There are two major changes in the charter. The first is an acceptance of the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, based on the 1967 borders, and the second is severing ties with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. These two changes, however, come with a demand to cancel the Balfour Declaration, the Partition Plan and the Oslo Agreements, and statements about a holy war to fully liberate historic Palestine, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, from north to south. The "Zionist entity" is illegitimate, Palestine is to be a Muslim Arab state ("a blessed and holy land"), while the colonialism that followed the creation of the Zionist movement due to anti-Semitism "must disappear from Palestine."

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*Adv. **Gilead Sher** heads the Center for Applied Negotiations (CAN) and is a senior research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)** at Tel Aviv University. He served as former Prime Minister Ehud Barak's bureau chief.*

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