

Israel must establish the rules of the game

Hamas's long-planned attack is an effort to position itself as the defenders of Jerusalem. Israel must shatter the terror group's assumptions

Udi Dekel / May 13, 2021

Well before the Sheikh Jarrah dispute erupted, Hamas was prepared to launch rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip, including toward Jerusalem. Its goal was to tie the Gaza Strip to al-Aqsa (the Temple Mount) in the hearts and minds of the Palestinians and the wider Arab world. As Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh proclaimed, “The equation that connects the Gaza Strip with Jerusalem is strong.” The fire toward Israel’s capital specifically on Israel’s Jerusalem Day was intended to establish that equation and cast Hamas as “the defender of al-Aqsa.”

Thus far, Hamas’s achievements are numerous. The terror group issued an ultimatum and delivered on the threat, notably with its opening assault on Jerusalem and the rocket salvos targeting central Israel. It assumed the mantle of defender of al-Aqsa and Jerusalem. It incited and ignited violence by young Arab citizens of Israel in cities where Jews and Arabs live side by side.

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