

A Brief History of the Netanyahu-Hamas Alliance

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OPINION

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For 14 years, Netanyahu's policy was to keep Hamas in power; the pogrom of October 7, 2023, helps the Israeli prime minister preserve his own rule



Benjamin Netanyahu. "The pogrom of October 7, 2023, helps Netanyahu, and not for the first time, to preserve his rule."
"Credit: Richard Drew /AP"

Adam Raz writes in **Haaretz** Oct 20, 2023

Much ink has been spilled describing the longtime relationship – rather, alliance – between Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas. And still, the very fact that there has been close cooperation between the Israeli prime minister (with the support of many on the right) and the fundamentalist organization seemingly evaporated from most of the current analyses – everyone’s talking about “failures,” “mistakes” and “contzeptziot” (fixed conceptions). Given this, there is a need not only to review the history of cooperation

but also to conclude unequivocally: The pogrom of October 7, 2023, helps Netanyahu, and not for the first time, to preserve his rule, certainly in the short term.

The MO of Netanyahu's policy since his return to the Prime Minister's Office in 2009 has and continues to be, on the one hand, bolstering the rule of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and, on the other, weakening the Palestinian Authority.

His return to power was accompanied by a complete turnaround from the policy of his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, who sought to end the conflict through a peace treaty with the most moderate Palestinian leader – PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

For the last 14 years, while implementing a divide-and-conquer policy vis-a-vis the West Bank and Gaza, “Abu Yair” (“Yair’s father,” in Arabic, as Netanyahu called himself while campaigning in the Arab community before one recent election) has resisted any attempt, military or diplomatic, that might bring an end to the **Hamas regime**.

In practice, since the Cast Lead operation in late 2008 and early 2009, during the Olmert era, Hamas' rule has not faced any genuine military threat. On the contrary: The group has been supported by the Israeli prime minister, and funded with his assistance.

When Netanyahu declared in April 2019, as he has after every other round of fighting, that “we have restored deterrence with Hamas” and that “we have blocked the main supply routes,” he was lying through his teeth.

For over a decade, Netanyahu has lent a hand, in various ways, to the growing military and political power of Hamas. Netanyahu is the one who turned Hamas from a terror organization with few resources into a semi-state body.

Releasing Palestinian prisoners, allowing cash transfers, as the Qatari envoy comes and goes to Gaza as he pleases, agreeing to the import of a broad array of goods, construction materials in particular, with the knowledge that much of the material will be designated for terrorism and not for building civilian infrastructure, increasing the number of work permits in Israel for Palestinian workers from Gaza, and more. All these developments created symbiosis between the flowering of fundamentalist terrorism and preservation of Netanyahu's rule.

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