



The International Union of Muslim Scholars issued a fatwa calling for military Muslim support for the Gaza Strip

November 5, 2023

Overview

- ▶ On October 31, 2023, the **International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), a radical Islamist organization based in Qatar**, held a press conference to announce a fatwa entitled "The duty of Islamic governments regarding [the necessity to respond to] the Zionist invasion of Gaza." **It called on the regimes and armies of the Muslim countries for urgent military intervention to save the residents of the Gaza Strip and provide material, religious, political and legal assistance.** According to the fatwa, it was primarily the duty of the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria and Israeli Arabs, as well as of the countries bordering Israel. The fatwa criticized their silence, claiming it was a "religious sin and a betrayal of Allah."
- ▶ It was the second fatwa issued by the IUMS since the beginning of the war. On October 21, 2023, it issued a fatwa claiming that the actions of the residents of the Gaza Strip and "Palestine" were "jihad" according to Islamic religious law, and therefore they were obligated to "liberate their land," and helping the residents of Gaza and "Palestine" was a religious duty that applied to all Muslims, each according to status and ability, whether by sacrificing life and money, or through words, demonstrations or political stance. On October 7, 2023, the organization issued a message supporting Hamas' barbaric terrorist attack.
- ▶ The IUMS was founded in 2004 by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who directed it until 2018, and who for many years was considered one of the leading Sunni Muslim jurists. **The organization has its headquarters in Doha, the capital of Qatar, which apparently also supports it.** Al-Qaradawi was born in Egypt, moved to Qatar in the 1960s and operated from there until his death in 2022. He was the Muslim Brotherhood's supreme religious and ideological authority, although he did not formally serve as its leader. His views on Israel were militant and radical and **he was Hamas' highest source of religious authority. He supported Palestinian terrorism against soldiers and civilians, promoted suicide bombing attacks, even if civilian men, women and children were injured and killed in the attacks.**

► **The most recent fatwa makes it clear that although Qatar, which has represented itself as actively mediating the issue of humanitarian relief for the Gaza Strip and the release of the kidnapped, in reality serves as a shelter for an extremist, militant Islamist organization which calls on Muslims for military-terrorist activity against Israel.**

Further Information

► On October 31, 2023, the World Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) held a press conference in Doha, Qatar, to announce a fatwa entitled "The duty of Islamic governments regarding [the necessity to respond to] the Zionist invasion of Gaza." It called on Muslim governments and armies to provide urgent military intervention to save the residents of the Gaza Strip as well as material, religious, political and legal assistance. The fatwa also criticized their silence, claiming it was a "religious sin and a betrayal of Allah." (IUMS YouTube channel, October 31, 2023).

► **The main points of the fatwa** (IUMS website, October 31, 2023):

- ◆ According to Islamic religious law, the ruling regimes and their armies had to provide urgent military intervention to save the Gaza Strip from "genocide" and total destruction, with a full commitment to the duty of supporting Palestine religiously, politically, legally and morally, and in accordance with international treaties and the strategic interests of the region and the Islamic nation.
- ◆ According to Islamic religious law, the duty of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian "organizations" in Judea, Samaria and the territory of Israel, of the countries bordering Israel [Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon], and of all the Arab and Islamic countries, in coordination with the Palestinians and the four border countries, was to provide the Gaza Strip with military intervention, equipment and knowledge. It was incumbent upon them to form an alliance that would "abandon their hesitation and weakness," which had persisted for decades and allowed Israel to continue "its crimes."
- ◆ It was the duty of religious scholars, "elites" and various bodies to act urgently to pressure the ruling regimes, their armies and their political, parliamentary and legal institutions to intervene and act quickly, and bear their religious, historical, constitutional and strategic responsibilities.
- ◆ The comprehensive Western military, financial, media, diplomatic and strategic support for Israel obligated the Arab and Islamic countries to take reciprocal military, financial, media, diplomatic and strategic measures to achieve an international

balance. It was unthinkable that their armies, with an order of battle of four million soldiers and an annual budget of \$170 billion dollars, remain confined to their bases.

◆ According to Islamic religious law, it was forbidden to remain silent in the face of aggression. Abandoning Gaza, al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem and “Palestine” to annihilation and destruction was a betrayal of Allah and his messenger and the believers, and an extremely serious sin.



Right: The press conference where the fatwa was revealed (IUMS YouTube channel, October 31, 2023). Left: The fatwa as it appeared on the Union's website (IUMS website, October 31, 2023)

► It was the second fatwa issued by the Union since the beginning of the war. On October 21, 2023, it issued one emphasizing that the actions of Gaza and "Palestine" were considered jihad, which made it an obligation to liberate their land. The fatwa also emphasized that aid for the residents of Gaza and "Palestine" was a religious obligation not only for the Palestinians but for all Muslims, each one according to his status and ability, and by any possible means, whether by sacrificing life or money, to through words, demonstrations and political positions. It appealed the Arab and Muslim rulers, emphasizing that their religious duty was to support their “brothers” in the Gaza Strip with every type of force, be it military, financial or diplomatic, and by means of an intransigent and clear political position of boycotting and isolating Israel. Normalization with Israel, on any issue, was prohibited and the countries that normalized relations with Israel had to sever them (IUMS website, October 22, 2023).



The October 21, 2023, the fatwa (IUMS website, October 22, 2023)

►On October 7, 2023, the organization published a statement signed by its president supporting Hamas’ barbaric terrorist attack, which he called "effective and necessary.” The Union also emphasized that Muslims had a religious duty to support their brothers and sisters in all of Palestine, especially in al-Aqsa (IUMS website, October 7, 2023).

Appendix

The International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS)

►The IUMS is a radical Islamist organization based in and apparently supported by Qatar. The organization was founded in 2004 by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who was considered one of the leading Sunni Muslim jurists for many years. Through the Union he coordinated the activities of radical Islamic clerics from around the globe, many, but not all of them members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Together they fostered contemporary radical Islamist discourse. The headquarters of the Union are in Doha and it also has branches in Turkey, Tunisia and Gaza.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi¹



Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Palinfo, August 15, 2010)

► Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who died on September 25, 2022, is considered one of the most important Muslim jurists and ultimate spiritual authority by tens of millions of Muslims in the world. Born in Egypt, he lived most of his life in Qatar. He was highly regarded by the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoot, Hamas, and by the Islamic Movement in Israel. When the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed in Egypt he became a wanted man.

► Yusuf al-Qaradawi held extremist views regarding Israel and was the foremost source of religious authority for Hamas. He supported Palestinian terrorism, including attacking civilians, claiming that it was a “legitimate” expression of “resistance.” Al-Qaradawi supported Palestinian terrorism against soldiers and civilians, promoted suicide bombing attacks, even if civilian men, women and children were injured and killed in the attacks. He also issued a fatwa calling for Jews around the world to be “attacked” [killed] because he saw no fundamental difference between Judaism and Zionism, and therefore every Jewish target was equivalent to an Israeli target. His position as a Sunni Islamic leader made his fatwas enabling Palestinian terrorism more “religiously valid,” and he was extremely influential in shaping the anti-Israel mindset of the Muslim and Arab world. Senior Hamas terrorists relied on his fatwas to “justify” suicide bombing attacks.

¹ For further information, see the November 2022 ITIC report, “[Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi and his impact on the dissemination of radical Islam](#),” and the February 2011 report, “[Portrait of Sheikh Dr. Yusuf Abdallah al-Qaradawi, senior Sunni Muslim cleric, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood](#).”