



News Release
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Islamic Jihad Leader Condemns ISIS, Praises Gaza Resistance, and Calls for Palestinian Unity

Interview in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*

27 March 2015 – “Palestine as a cause predates all of the current regional turmoil and it needs everyone on its side,” says Dr. Ramadan Shallah, the leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad in a rare in-depth interview which appears in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* issue 174. The elusive leader offers analysis and insight into the goals of the Palestinian resistance, the future of a Palestinian consensus government as well as causes and outcomes of the 2014 summer assault on Gaza. He also condemns ISIS, and expresses his concern for the future of the entire region.

In light of the recent reelection of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the further entrenchment of a right-wing government in Israel, Shallah’s prediction for an Israeli strategic shift, a reevaluation among the Israeli public—a deep self-examination, does not appear to have come true. Following the 2014 Israeli assault on Gaza, “were Israel today to have leaders of the stature of Ben-Gurion, Begin, Rabin or Sharon, it would embark on a far-reaching self-assessment,” states Shallah.

Shallah points to the brutal nature of the Israeli assault on Gaza last summer and how it served to not only unite the people of Gaza behind the resistance, but also bring together resistance factions into a resistance force. According to Shallah, the most important factor in last summer’s assault on Gaza and the failure of Israel to defeat the Palestinians “was the unified position of the Palestinian delegation conducting the indirect negotiations in Cairo.”

Beyond Palestine and Israel, Shallah speaks about his concerns for the future of the entire region, including a strong condemnation of ISIS and the specters of dismemberment and dissolution of states across the Middle East. “Does what we are witnessing and hearing today in any way reflect the cultural richness and preeminent humanism of Islamic civilization?” he asks. According to Shallah, it is beyond the capabilities of small actors like Islamic Jihad to address the nightmare of an imploding Middle East, but rather large actors who need to reevaluate their positions and mitigate the damage.

“Extremists consider that secular Arab regimes and elites are waging a war on Islam and that they [the Islamists] have sprung to its defense. It is the absence of freedoms and the lack of justice that precipitate unrest and autocratic Arab regimes should reassess their relationship to their citizens with a view to rectifying that situation.”

Shallah calls for unity and a rectification in the Middle East that “is all-encompassing, leaving out no one, regardless of ethnicity, creed, or sect, so that citizenship becomes the bedrock of society...and builds on and benefits from our historical experience of peaceful coexistence and tolerance.”

This [interview](#) appears in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* Issue 174 and in Arabic in the *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyah*. To request a copy of the interview please contact Paige Brownlow at 202-342-3990 ext. 13 or paigeb@palestine-studies.org

About Dr. Ramadan Abdullah Shallah

Dr. Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, born in the Gaza City neighborhood of Shuja'iyyah in 1958, obtained his doctorate in economics from the University of Durham in the United Kingdom and was subsequently adjunct professor at the University of South Florida in the United States. In 1995, he assumed the leadership of Islamic Jihad after the movement's charismatic founder, Fathi Shikaki, was assassinated in an Israeli operation in Malta. Shallah himself remains based in Damascus, reflecting the closer relations Islamic Jihad has traditionally nurtured with Iran and Syria, when compared to Hamas.

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