

Are Islamist Beheadings Now Capturing the Attention of the West?

The beheading of U.S. journalist James Foley has raised concerns in the West about Islamist threats. Israel has been facing this specter for decades and, given Israel's proximity to the Islamist threat, the Jewish state is the canary in the coal mine for the West.

But Gaza seems to be the Western blind spot, even though the Hamas-ISIS parallels are glaringly obvious.

Since beheadings are the current media focus, and ISIS has beheaded infants, it's worth noting that Hamas praised the 2011 Itamar murders, which involved the decapitation of a baby. Islamist beheadings should surprise no one, given that they've been happening for much of (and despite) modernity—perhaps because “Islam is the only major world religion today that is cited ... to legitimize beheadings,” according to this study.

While there have been no reported Hamas beheadings of journalists, the similarities between Hamas and ISIS, which stands for Islamist State of Iraq and Syria, are more important than their differences.

Both would like to establish a caliphate, which is an Islamic state headed by a supreme religious and political leader. The Hamas interior minister declared as much in this 2013 speech.

Both gain and keep power through savagery and fear. Hamas rose to power in Gaza thanks to its violent 2007 coup, and recently planned a second putsch (in the West Bank). Hamas famously threw its political opponents off rooftops.

Like ISIS, Hamas uses clinics, schools, mosques, and charities to gain legitimacy, and inculcates children with the values of jihadi terror. A vice documentary exposed how ISIS indoctrinates and uses children for war, but Hamas has been doing so for years, educating children to worship death and using child soldiers.

Hamas's use of human shields has been widely documented (and proven very effective in turning public opinion against Israel by exponentially increasing Gazan civilian casualties). ISIS used 500 Yazidi captives and 39 abducted Indians as human shields.

ISIS is known for its expulsion of Christians from Mosul and its genocidal murder of Yazidis and Christians who refuse to convert to Islam or pay the jizyah. Hamas would undoubtedly behave the same way toward the religious minorities within its reach, if Israeli Jews didn't have the protection of a superior military, and if Hamas didn't depend on international donations to Gaza that might dry up after a wholesale slaughter of the tiny Christian community there.

But even with these checks on Hamas's brutality, Hamas regularly practices and preaches religious hatred. For years, Hamas has attacked Christians, including defiling Christian graves, abducting and murdering Christians, and more recently using a Gazan church to launch rockets at Israel. Hamas preaches hateful incitement against Jews, has desecrated Jewish holy sites, and has murdered hundreds of Jews in terrorist attacks.

ISIS uses Sharia to justify its barbaric treatment of women. Also enamored with Sharia, Hamas treats women as second-class citizens and endorses honor killings.

Like ISIS, Hamas advocates the death penalty for homosexuals, lets Islamic morality police govern economic activity, and punishes crime with lashings, amputations, and executions.

There have been no broadcast beheadings of homosexuals by ISIS, but such horrors can't be far off, given that ISIS fighters include gay-hating Westerners.

Hamas condemned the assassination of Osama Bin Laden, and ISIS aspires to surpass him.

Yet, astonishingly, President Obama and liberals have continually called for restraint when Israel's military has confronted Hamas (after Hamas's countless attacks against Israeli civilians) and Obama has pressed Israel to negotiate with Hamas (as if the U.S. would ever negotiate with ISIS). Worse still, the Obama administration tried to advance Hamas's negotiating position and recently pressured Israel into letting Hamas keep its military capabilities. Given the opportunity to obliterate ISIS's terrorist infrastructure, would the U.S. ever spare any part of it?

Even more troubling—in terms of the perils involved—is Obama's feckless strategy toward the Iranian regime, which is the world's chief sponsor of Islamist terrorist groups (including Hamas and Hezbollah). Like so many Islamist terrorist organizations, Iran executes homosexuals; mistreats women; persecutes religious minorities; employs barbaric, Sharia-law punishments (like amputation and stoning); and brutalizes political dissenters (among myriad other human-rights violations).

But unlike the terrorist organizations, Iran could theoretically acquire a nuclear weapons capability in under two months. Imagine an Islamist state, which openly supports Islamist terrorists, possessing nukes. Alarming, Obama's overall approach and eagerness to negotiate any deal he can get with Iran have signaled weakness in a region that respects only strength. As if to laugh at Obama's naiveté, the Iranian regime has continued supporting Hamas despite the sanctions relief that Obama delivered to the Islamic Republic. Obama's meek and misguided policy has only emboldened the Iranian

regime, improved its economic condition, and given diplomatic cover to Iran's nuclear program.

Islamist groups such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and Iran-backed Hamas and Hezbollah, all seek the destruction of Western values and civilization. The pursuit of nukes by the Islamist state of Iran—which eventually could enable nuclear terrorism by Iran's jihadi proxies—poses the greatest threat of all. The West ignores these facts at its peril and should therefore support Israel's war against Hamas and its efforts against Iranian nukes, just as the U.S. has rightly (albeit tardily and minimally) supported the Kurds in their fight against ISIS.

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