

Hamas Official: Wiping out Israel Would Be Easier From West Bank

If Hamas manages to establish a foothold in the West Bank, it would be able to wipe out Israel and establish an Islamic state in its stead, senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahar told Palestinian news outlet *Al-Ayyam* this week.

The interview, translated and posted by *Palestinian Media Watch* on Sunday, revealed Hamas's previously covert intention of taking over the West Bank.

"[Some] have said Hamas wants to create an Islamic emirate in Gaza. We won't do that, but we will build an Islamic state in Palestine, all of Palestine," he said.

According to al-Zahar, if Hamas could "transfer what it has or just a small part of it to the West Bank, we [Hamas] would be able to settle the battle of the final promise with a speed that no one can imagine."

Al-Zahar alluded to Hamas's goal with a passage from the Quran: "Then when the final promise came, [We sent your enemies] ... to enter the Temple in Jerusalem, as they entered it the first time, and to destroy what they had taken over with [total] destruction," implying a war in which Israel is wiped out.

In August, it was released for publication that the Shin Bet security agency uncovered a Hamas plot to topple the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Hamas then claimed it was an Israeli ploy to disrupt the recently struck Palestinian unity deal.

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