

April 26, 2023

Special Dispatch No. 10579

## A Look Into The Discussion On Kuwaiti Salafi Cleric Othman Al-Khamis's Argument Opposing Palestinian Factions' Attacks On Israel, Criticism Of Hamas, And Call For Temporary Truce With Israel

On September 10, 2022, the YouTube channel of Podcast Insan published an interview [1] featuring Kuwaiti radical Salafi cleric Othman Al-Khamis in which he reiterated his position objecting to the operations that Palestinian factions carry out against Israel. In the interview, Al-Khamis described these attacks as "wrong" and recommended that the Palestinians focus on preparing themselves militarily and raising their children according to the right ideology to fight Israel at the right time. Al-Khamis justified his position by arguing that the Palestinians have no chance of winning a war with Israel, which is more powerful than them and would kill and imprison more Palestinians and destroy their houses in response to these operations. In the past, Al-Khamis has also criticized Hamas for fighting with Israel, questioned the legitimacy of its jihad, and pointed to its alliance with Iran and praise of Ruhollah Khomeini, the former supreme leader of Iran, whom he accused of killing Sunni Muslims and insulting and cursing Prophet Muhammad's companions.

Furthermore, Al-Khamis criticized Hamas for eulogizing Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Qods Force in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. Along with his criticism of Hamas, Al-Khamis has repeatedly stressed his conviction about the divine prophecy that Muslims will eventually defeat the Jews and expel them from Palestine.

On the other hand, Al-Khamis's critics defended Hamas and its ideology and downplayed its alliance with Iran and its officials' praise for both Khomeini and Soleimani. Al-Khamis has also been criticized for his lack of knowledge about the conflict and for his support for the wars in Syria and Yemen, which contradicts his argument regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This report will highlight the argument behind Al-Khamis's call, his views on Iranian-Shi'ite support of Palestinian resistance groups along with his views on other armed conflicts in the region and will present the counterarguments of those who disagree with him.



Kuwaiti radical Salafi cleric Othman Al-Khamis

### Al-Khamis's Views On Palestinian Factions' Attacks On Israel

Expressing his views regarding the Palestinian factions' attacks against Israel, Al-Khamis said during the September 10, 2022, interview: "I have always told those who are based in Gaza and Palestine, may Allah protect them and their children, that it is wrong to attack an Israeli or kill Jews and that would cause 50 women to become widows and for your houses to be destroyed. At this time, you should prepare yourself militarily, raise your children the right way and the day when they would emerge will come." When asked if he thinks that the attacks carried out by Palestinian resistance groups are "unnecessary," he responded: "Of course, unless in certain cases when Jews would start the provocation, in Al-Aqsa mosque for example. If the Jews enter Al-Aqsa mosque, then they should defend themselves. May Allah reward them.... they have made us proud. But, the Palestinians should not provoke the Israelis." The interviewer then interrupted him: "But the Israelis are occupying their land?" to which he responded: "I understand that they are occupying their land but the question is, are they capable or not. We have a proverb that goes, if you cannot defeat them, shake hands with them. They do not have the ability to defeat the Israelis. They should not lie to themselves. Let's say I attacked a Jewish man, let's say they killed two Jewish men by snipers, what would be the consequences? Fifty Palestinians would be killed."

The interviewer then pointed to the saying that Al-Khamis cited earlier and noted: "We should not shake hands with the Israeli entity" and Al-Khamis agreed with him: "May Allah reward you. That was a Kuwaiti proverb. What I meant was the Palestinians can reconcile with the Jews and broker a truce which does not mean normalization. For now, they can be tolerant, but they should prepare themselves, raise their children and their grandchildren upon that... to advance one step on the right direction, and one brick on the right foundation. But right now, they cannot and they should not lie to themselves. I have told you before that the prophet Muhammad used to see the idols for 13 years and would still go pray near the Ka'bah... and would not defy their existence. He did not destroy them. By the way, there is a hadith saying that the prophet and Ali Bin Abi Talib went to the Ka'bah at night and destroyed a couple of idols. That hadith is not authentic."



Dr. Othman Al-Khamis | podcast insan

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In the past, Al-Khamis has expressed similar views, arguing that the suffering and hardship experienced by the Palestinians was a divine test because of the sins committed by Muslims and urged Muslims who are concerned about the situation in Al-Aqsa mosque to pray for the Palestinian people. In a March 19, 2010 YouTube video, he said: "Allah would not like to see the unbelievers imposing their will on Muslims... But because of the sins committed by Muslims and because of their weakness, the unbelievers imposed their will on Muslims. Many people feel saddened and obligated to do something. That is a correct feeling but I would say, keep praying for them for now..." In the same video, Al-Khamis mentioned that natural disasters that take place in different part of the world such as earthquakes and floods "are part of the soldiers of Allah and if Allah wanted to, he would have unleashed his soldiers on the Jews... but Allah has a point and wanted us to go back to him... and be devout and afterwards, he would liberate Bait Al-Maqdis and other countries... in all cases, keep praying for your brothers..."<sup>[2]</sup>



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### **Al-Khamis's Distinction Between "Resistance" And "Martyrdom Operations"**

Al-Khamis has also differentiated in the past between acts of resistance and martyrdom operations. On September 12, 2017, the YouTube *da'wa* ("preaching, invitation to Islam") channel Dhikr posted a video featuring Al-Khamis responding to whether it would be permissible to ask the Palestinians to endure their situation and to not wage war on Israel. He said: "Resisting is one thing and killing yourself is another. You have the right to resist by not selling your house and by not submitting to them in situations that where you would be able to. [That could also include] not giving them your land and by refusing to adhere to their decision to ban you from entering Al-Aqsa mosque... They have the right to do so and may Allah grant resolution to our Palestinian brothers there. But, the operations they call martyrdom operations are the ones that are impermissible because they entail taking a life that Allah has dignified at the expense of a group of Jews. In addition, a great deal of hardship would be caused as a consequence. The point here is that they are stronger in terms of numbers and capabilities right now and the Palestinians who live in Palestine are not ready to fight them. [The Israelis] would destroy their houses, kill and capture them and may harass women. We should not give them a reason to do so."

To support his argument, Al-Khamis noted that when Muslims were weak during the time of the prophet in Makkah, he saw his companions being tortured and would call on them to endure their situation even after some were murdered. Al-Khamis added: "The situation changed after the prophet moved to Madina, and the Muslims became stronger especially after the Battle of Badr... Then they were able to fight against the nonbelievers and carry out permissible aggressions against them as was the case with the raid on Nakhla and the Battle of Badr, when the prophet sent men to seize the caravans of the nonbelievers to compensate for what the nonbelievers had seized from the Muslims. Muslims have the right to do so when they are strong. But when Muslims are in a state of weakness, they should figure out how to deal with their situation. It is not wise for someone to go blow himself up to kill 20 Jews and in return, 50 innocent Muslims are killed, others are imprisoned, houses are destroyed, and others are displaced because of 20 Jewish dogs." Concluding his answer, he reiterated: "Resisting is one thing. People have to resist and may Allah grant them victory and empower them and may Allah protect them, but you would only fight when you have the military means... to face the enemy. If the military means are not available, endure the situation until the Muslims are well-prepared and then you could take part in fighting."<sup>[3]</sup>



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However, Al-Khamis's objection to martyrdom operations is not conclusive and he explained that in a video posted on his YouTube channel on December 20, 2016, titled "The Ruling On Martyrdom 'Suicide' Operations" in which he said: "I have addressed this issue many times but [I will address it again quickly]. If the war is taking place and has been declared and there has been an Islamic command declaring jihad, there would be no objection to someone blowing himself up at a gate to allow Muslims to enter. But, for someone to do so during this current situation, it would not be jihad and it would be impermissible and considered suicide. It would be meaningless to do so to kill a Jewish pig or so. It is impermissible for the grave harm that would be caused by [the operation]. And for someone to take his own life in this way is impermissible. Muslim lives are precious to Allah."<sup>[4]</sup>



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### Al-Khamis's Criticism Of Hamas: Hamas Should Be Prepared Religiously And Ideologically Before Engaging In The Jihad

A few years earlier, Al-Khamis condemned Hamas for fighting a war with Israel despite the lack of capabilities to cause significant harm to Israel. Elaborating on his position, Al-Khamis noted in a speech he delivered in August 2014 that "in these kinds of situations, one should look at facts as facts and not argue or be stubborn. Even though our hearts are with the people of Gaza, we call on those in charge to fear Allah on behalf of those who had been killed. More than 2,000 Muslims were killed, and more than 10,000 Muslim were injured. Who is responsible for their death and at what cost? How many Jews have we killed? Fewer than 100 Jews had been killed at the expense of those killed and wounded. They were not even 75. At what cost? What has been achieved in return for all the bombing and injuries that the Muslims have sustained? The blockade has been in place since 2006. It was not emplaced recently. This war is not the war that would lift the blockade. Even the previous war did not manage to lift the blockade." Condemning those who argue that instead of dying in Gaza as a result of the blockade, it would be better to die as a result of Israel bombings, he said: "No, it is not" and added that the number of those killed during one month of war exceeds the number of those who died during seven years of living under blockade. Al-Khamis concluded his speech by stressing that "if a person would like to fight the enemy, there should be a chance of winning. The basic principle of waging war is to attain victory, not to die. Muslims do not fight to die but they fight to attain victory... Therefore, if the Muslims are in a state of weakness, then they are not authorized to fight and instead, they are authorized to prepare military means."<sup>[5]</sup>



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In addition to his criticism of Hamas for carrying out operations against Israel, Al-Khamis also condemned Hamas for its alliance with Iran and questioned the legitimacy of its jihad because of its leaders' praise of Ruhollah Khomeini, the former supreme leader of Iran, whom Al-Khamis accused of killing Sunni scholars and insulting companions of Prophet Muhammad. In a May 20, 2021 YouTube video, he said: "When they talk about jihad... What kind of jihad are they talking about? A jihad led by people who asked Allah to have mercy on Khomeini? How could anyone wage jihad with such people? They ask for mercy for Khomeini, who killed Sunni people and who insulted and cursed the prophet's companions and who declared the prophet's companions to be unbelievers. They ask Allah for mercy on such a person and then call on us to come wage jihad with them. Firstly, we should correct their ideology before declaring jihad on such matters." He then accused Hamas, in their vow of allegiance, of vowing to wage jihad for the sake of the party, and said: "Does that constitute waging jihad for the sake of Allah? The people who call for jihad call for jihad for the sake of Allah... If we really want to wage jihad, we should call for it the right way and through the right venue. What I mean is that if someone would like to call for jihad, he should be prepared religiously and ideologically before engaging in the jihad that he calls on us to wage."

[6]



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Despite his harsh criticism of Hamas, Al-Khamis has been accused of retracting his position when he called on Muslims to set their differences aside and concentrating on supporting Palestinian resistance groups. In a November 13, 2021 YouTube video, Al-Khamis said: "I would like to sincerely say, let's put our differences aside and come together as one unit against a common enemy, which is the belligerent Jews who have occupied the land of Palestine regardless of our affiliations and ideas. Today, we are all with the Palestinian people, with the religion of Allah and with Beit Al-Maqdis."<sup>[7]</sup>

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## Dr. Saleh Al-Riqab, Hamas Member And Former Deputy Minister Of Religious Endowment, Responds To Al-Khamis's Criticism: Al-Khamis Lacks Knowledge Of Reality Of Jihad, Mujahideen In Gaza

In reaction to Al-Khamis's August 2014 speech condemning Hamas operations against Israel, Hamas member and former Deputy Minister of Religious Endowment Dr. Saleh Al-Riqab responded at length to what he described as Al-Khamis's "claims and fallacies." In his detailed response, which he published on his website, Dr. Al-Riqab accused Al-Khamis of discouraging Muslims from supporting the people of Gaza and stressed that Al-Khamis has based his claims and fallacies on "his lack of knowledge of the reality of jihad and the mujahideen in Gaza."

After rejecting Al-Khamis's claim that Gaza does not have recognized religious scholars, Al-Riqab named a few scholars including himself and noted that there is a league of Scholars of Palestine in Gaza that includes hundreds of scholars. In addition, he stated that "all the leaders of Hamas hold recognized scientific degrees and some of them have higher degrees in religious studies and other fields." Al-Riqab then condemned Al-Khamis for claiming that the oath of fealty of Hamas is for the party not the sake of Allah, and wrote: "Haven't you heard and haven't millions of Muslims heard the sons of Hamas and its leaders during marches and celebrations should the slogan of Hamas: Allah is our destiny, the prophet is our role model, jihad is our path, and dying for the sake of Allah is our utmost desire."

Addressing Al-Khamis's condemnation of Hamas operations against Israel and blaming them for bringing hardships on the Palestinian people, Al-Riqab wrote: "Your statement is strange and abnormal and something that not even beginner level scholars would dare to say... There are dozens of books, religious research, and fatwas authored by an unlimited number of scholars from the Islamic world that include fatwas legitimizing jihad in Palestine and other Muslim countries that were invaded by the unbelievers and the polytheists." Responding to Al-Khamis's argument that waging jihad against Israel now would bring calamity to the Palestinian people, Al-Riqab noted that "this is a misunderstanding of Quran 2:195 'And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands, and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good.'"

Al-Riqab then addressed Al-Khamis's questioning of the legitimacy of the jihad waged by Hamas in light of Hamas leader Khaled Mish'al's praise for Khomeini and visit to his grave. He wrote: "This incident took place more than 20 years ago and [Mish'al] was questioned by his brothers and he knew the rejectionist Shi'ites as he had lived most of his life in Kuwait. Also, if Khaled Mish'al had made a mistake, that should not be generalized as if it represented Hamas ideology. And why did you not advise him and question him... Secondly, the sons of Hamas and the sons of Gaza are Sunni Muslims and they would not allow any deviant group or thoughts to creep into their society... And why would you attack Hamas and its jihad while it has not and will not allow a single *Hussainiyah* [Shi'ite house of worship] to be built in Gaza, whereas you know how many Hussainiyah exist in Kuwait. Hamas did not and will not allow the Shi'ites to host any event in Gaza and they have no newspapers that attack the prophet's companions and question their faith as you have in Kuwait. Rest assured in that regard and as we wage jihad against the Jews, we also wage jihad intellectually... To safekeep our ideology and creed of our Muslim society.."

Elaborating on his rejection of Al-Khamis's argument that the people of Gaza are waging a defensive Jihad, he wrote: "The Zionist enemy occupies 78 percent of Palestine and when they launched their aggression against Gaza, they did not come from outside of occupied Palestine. Defensive jihad is waged against an enemy who is coming from another country and across the borders of Muslim land. Why would you mix up things and present a crooked jurisprudence that you tried to apply to the situation in Gaza, which is waging jihad on behalf of the Ummah... Instead of supporting it and praying for its people to attain victory... and sadly, we did not hear that from you." Al-Riqab also mocked Al-Khamis's call on the Palestinians to endure their situation and follow the example of the prophet companions who had endured torture at the hands of the unbelievers in Makkah, saying at the time Muslims were "in a state of weakness and the verses of jihad had not been revealed yet."<sup>[8]</sup>

## مقالاتي

## الرد المبين على مزاعم وأغاليط الدكتور عثمان الخميسي

نشر في: ٥-٥-٢٠٢٠ ساعة: ٥٠٠ طباعة

الرد المبين على مزاعم وأغاليط الدكتور عثمان الخميسي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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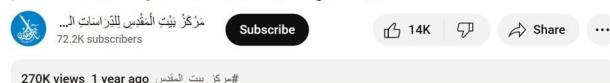
فقد قدّر الله تعالى لي أن استمع لمحاضرة للشيخ الدكتور عثمان الخميسي خطبه عما يهدى في غزة، وقد تضمن محاضرته مجموعة من الأغاليط والمزاعم، التي ما كان ينبغي أن يقع فيها الشفاف، تعمقت تحدّل المسلمين عن مناصرة أهل غزة ويعدهم، وقد بيّن مزاعمهم وما صدر منه من أغاليط، وما تقدّم به من أحكام شرعية أو نصائح سواء للمسلمين تخذيلاً عن مناصرة غزة واهلها، أو نصائح لأهل غزة بالصبر

## Al-Khamis's Criticism Of Hamas Continues After Al-Riqab's Response

Despite Al-Riqab's refutation of Al-Khamis's accusations of Hamas, Al-Khamis continued his criticism of Hamas's alliance with Iran. In a YouTube video posted on May 15, 2021, Al-Khamis addressed the Palestinian factions, saying: "Many of these factions have allied with Iran, Hizbullah and other deviant organizations, so what have they done for you? Where is the Al-Quds Brigades, where is Iran? And where is Hizbullah? They have abandoned you. So, go back to your sanity, fear Allah and wage jihad for the sake of Allah not for the sake of the party... Stop allying with these deviant groups as they are not a source of benefit for you."<sup>[9]</sup>



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A few days later, Al-Khamis was asked about his message to the Palestinian faction and whether it meant that he is against the Palestinian factions and their jihad. He responded by reiterating his views on Hamas and its alliance with Iran and said: "What I meant was that we oppose those who wage jihad for the sake of the party, oppose those who ally with Iran and opposed that they glorify Qassem Soleimani and organized a eulogy ceremony for him as he had killed Muslims. We also oppose their position regarding Syria... And we opposed Khaled Mish'al's prayer for mercy for the soul of Khomeini, who had killed Sunni people in Iran and insulted the companions of the prophet... But right now, since they are fighting against the unbelievers, we defend them and pray that Allah grant them victory over the unbelievers but we oppose their thoughts and actions." When asked about his message to Hamas, he said: "I call on them to fear Allah, and they should be prepared to wage jihad... And since they do not have the ability to wage jihad now, they should calm down and get prepared to wage jihad, particularly since we firmly believe as Muslims that Allah will expel the Jews and grant us victory over them, but we should follow the right path."<sup>[10]</sup>



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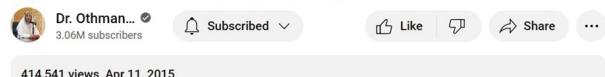
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## Al-Khamis's Position On Syria, Yemen

Critics of Al-Khamis's position on the Palestinian factions' jihad waged against Israel have often pointed to his support for jihad against the Syrian regime and against the Houthis in Yemen to accuse him of being inconsistent, since rebel factions in Syria are also being overpowered by the Syrian army. Expressing his views in support for the war against the Houthis in Yemen, Al-Khamis said in an April 11, 2015 YouTube video: "What [the Houthis] are doing in Yemen in terms of aggression against Muslims there, because they are empowered now, they destroyed many mosques, burned copies of the Quran, harassed Sunni people... Therefore, they should be disciplined, they should be killed and the least we can say about them is that they are aggressors if we do not say they are unbelievers. It is permissible for them to be killed and annihilated... fighting them now is a religious duty. They should be fought against, disciplined... What is happening now with the Decisive Storm operations is justified and a religious duty. The Muslim Ummah must punish this deviant aggressive group and all Muslims must support it with prayers and support or in any other ways. The most important thing is that this fighting is right and it should be supported... the Sunni Muslims who are killed while taking part in this battle, we ask Allah to accept them as martyrs because they are fighting the people of falsehood."[\[11\]](#)



صراع طائفى مذهبى الشیخ د. عثمان الخبیس #عاصفةالحزم هل



In a May 25, 2017 YouTube video, Al-Khamis described Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad as an "unbeliever" and said that the Syrians must rebel against him and remove him: "At this time, the Syrian people should not back down because retreating now would be against their interests and in fact, it would be harmful to them because Bashar will be dedicated to killing them and harassing their families... He should be rebelled against and he should be removed."[\[12\]](#)



عثمان الخبیس یکفر بشار الأسد ویدعو إلى الخروج عليه



In a November 10, 2022 video on YouTube, Al-Khamis responded to a question on whether the fight in Syria would be considered jihad or a sectarian war. He answered by saying: "The Nussairiyah [pejorative term for Alawites] are not Muslims. They are unbelievers... and they do not have anything to do with Islam, therefore, there is not doubt that it is jihad."[\[13\]](#)



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