

# ReViews

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Issue: Hamas Movement and the Arab Peace Initiative**

**ReViews** is a product of the Re'ut Institute which gathers quotes from different sources in the context of a political issue which is of long-term strategic significance.

In this issue we have gathered statements made by Hamas officials regarding the approach of Hamas and the Government of the Palestinian Authority (PA) towards the Arab Peace Initiative.

The "[Arab Peace Initiative](#)" was adopted at the Arab Summit in Beirut (March 28, 2002), and was based on ideas of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, according to which, Arab states were to normalize relations with Israel in exchange for (1) the establishment of a Palestinian state within June 4, 1967 borders and (2) a solution to the issue of Palestinian refugees in accordance with UN Resolution 194.

The initiative is not an elaborate platform for a permanent status agreement, but rather a general plan for the permanent status. It was "welcomed" by UN Resolution 1397, and referred to within the "[third phase of the Roadmap](#)".

In the Arab League conference in Khartoum (03/06), Arab leaders reiterated their commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative. Moreover, during the past month, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Yemen have requested "[Hamas](#)" representatives to agree to the initiative.

Meanwhile, the international community has demanded Hamas to recognize Israel, reaffirm its commitment to existing agreements and end violence – as a condition for continuing the transfer of funds to the Hamas-led PA government.

The following statements made by Hamas officials show that the movement does not negate the possibility of acknowledging the Arab Initiative. It may seem that Hamas is considering accepting the Initiative as a way to avoid the demand to explicitly recognize Israel:

- Khaled Mash'al, Head of Hamas Political Bureau: "Hamas will accept the Saudi initiative and consult with the council of the Muslim Brotherhood". ([A-shark Al-awsat](#), 2/8/06) (In Arabic).
- Khaled Mash'al: "(Hamas) cannot oppose the unified Arab stance expressed in the resolution passed by the Arab League summit. That resolution, approved in Beirut, speaks of recognizing Israel and normalizing relations with it in exchange for a full withdrawal and a solution to the refugee problem". (Rubinstein, [Ha'aretz](#), 2/13/06).
- Azat Al-Ghashek, member of Hamas Political Bureau, during a visit to Saudi Arabia: "We will never oppose a unified Arab stance and therefore we call upon Israel and the international community to accept the Arab position, so far put aside by Israel". ([Al-Hayat](#), 3/12/06). (In Arabic).
- During preparation for the Khartoum summit, Amr Moussa, Secretary-General of the Arab League announced that Hamas representatives informed him that following the establishment of the new PA government, the Hamas plans to declare its support of the Arab Peace Initiative. ([Al-Hayat](#), 3/26/06).

- In response to Egypt's demand that the Palestinians accept the Arab Peace Initiative, Mahmoud Zahar, PA Foreign Minister, stated: "I will convey all that I heard to every decision-maker and make a clear picture about the initiative. But the problem is: does the other party accept it?" ([YNET](#), 4/15/06).
- Mahmoud A-Zahar: "There are two necessary conditions for the success of the Arab Initiative: (1) fulfilling the basic demands of the Palestinian people; (2) acceptance of the initiative by the other side (Israel)." ([Al-Hayat](#), 4/20/06) (In Arabic).

End.