**The Hamas charter is alive and kicking – and Israeli civilians are dying**

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In a piece published last Friday in the Guardian, Ahmed Yousef, an adviser to the terror group Hamas, expressed his surprise at the fact that “diplomats, journalists, academics and politicians … seem to struggle” with the Hamas charter. The truth is that decent people struggle with the charter because of its antisemitic nature, but it’s also worthwhile taking a look at more recent statements by Hamas leaders.

On Monday, we awoke to news that four worshipping Jews, one of them a British national, were murdered by Palestinian terrorists as they prayed in their Jerusalem synagogue. Hamas praised this atrocity, as it praises every terror attack in which the victim is an Israeli Jew. There should be absolutely no doubt: Hamas’s recent statements celebrating terror attacks are entirely consistent with its charter, which calls for the murder of Jews.

In his article, Yousef refers to the Hamas charter as an “inspirational document”. One wonders which part of the charter inspires him? Perhaps it’s the claims that Jews and Zionists are behind most world revolutions and both world wars? Or the claim that the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” – an infamous antisemitic libel – is a true account of a sinister Jewish plot to take over the world?

Yousef later writes the following mind-boggling sentences: “But we certainly are less capable than the Israelis of manipulating the media. First they rallied the world against communism, then they labelled the nationalists terrorists; and now Islamists are the true villains.” It’s unclear how Israelis “rallied the world against communism”; perhaps he means the Jews? But that would be antisemitic again, wouldn’t it? As for the “Islamists”, they’ve earned their notoriety all by themselves, owing to heinous acts of barbarity that Hamas’s sister organisations, Islamic State (Isis) and al-Qaida, have committed across the Middle East.

Yousef claims that no one can “produce a shred of evidence that Hamas formally encourages prejudice against anyone’s ethnicity”. This is an explicit lie: Hamas TV, in a form of incitement and child abuse combined, teaches Palestinian children that all Jews should be killed, in order to brainwash the next generation to despise their Israeli neighbours and seek their destruction.

Earlier this year, Hamas members murdered three Jewish teenagers who were on their way home from school. Hamas’s leader, Khaled Meshaal, spoke warmly about the “blessed hands” of the perpetrators. In August this year, a Hamas spokesman, Fawzi Barhoum, expressed his organisation’s world view: “Let me say, loud and clear, to our people in the West Bank: Don’t you have cars? Don’t you have motorcycles? Don’t you have knives? Don’t you have clubs? Don’t you have bulldozers? Don’t you have trucks? Anyone who has a knife, a club, a weapon, or a car, yet does not use it to run over a Jew or a settler, and does not use it to kill dozens of Zionists, does not belong to Palestine.”

The incitement yielded results, and in October, Hamas hailed the car terror attack in which a Jewish infant was murdered in Jerusalem. The group then claimed responsibility for a subsequent car terror attack (5 November) in which another Israeli was murdered in the capital. This week (17 November), Hamas released a new video in Hebrew, noting previous hit-and-run attempts on Jews and calling for more attacks. Most recently, it has revelled in the synagogue massacre.

It bears repeating that Hamas’s recent statements celebrating the murder of Jews are entirely consistent with, and indeed inspired by, its charter. Hamas is engaged in a campaign of incitement, which has led to the violence that we are experiencing in Jerusalem. Yousef would have us declare the charter dead, but it seems he didn’t get the memo. The charter is alive and kicking; it’s Israeli civilians who are dying.

Hamas is a representative of a jihadi ideology that is the main obstacle to peace in our region, its rule of Gaza an ongoing tragedy for both Palestinians and Israelis. Imagining away its extremist, violent ethos will not advance the cause of peace. Hamas must be condemned and marginalised by the international community, just like Isis and al-Qaida, so that it doesn’t quash the hopes of the majority of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace.